DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 633 FL 801 490

AUTHOR	Moine-Boothe, Judith D., Ed.
TITLE	Notes on Literacy, 1999.
INSTITUTION	Summer Inst. of Linguistics, Dallas, TX.
ISSN	ISSN-0737-6707
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	94p.; Published quarterly.
AVAILABLE FROM	International Academic Bookstore, SIL International, 7500 West Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236 (annual subscription: U.S., $20.95; outside U.S., $23.95). Tel: 972-708-7404; e-mail: academic_books@sil.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Notes on Literacy; v25 n1-4 1999
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Applied Linguistics; Bilingual Education Programs; Cultural Education; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; Language Minorities; *Literacy; Politics of Education
IDENTIFIERS	Philippines

ABSTRACT

This quarterly journal serves literacy programs by sharing information of a practical and theoretical nature with literacy field workers. Articles in this volume include the following: "Long Words" (Ursula Weisemann); "Introduction to Bilingual Schooling Typology through Three Examples" (Scott McCracken); "The Challenge of Introducing First Language Component-Bridging Programs into the Philippine Formal Education Program" (Catherine Young); "The Cultural Impact of Literacy" (Julie Nelson); "Thoughts on the REFLECT Approach, Literacy, and Community Development in Ethnic Minority Language Groups" (Dennis and Susan Malone); "Literacy Programs: Getting the Ideology Right" (Keith Berry). There is also one book review: "The Politics of Writing," by Romy Clark and Roz Ivanic, is reviewed by Linda Seyer. (Contains 46 references.) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (Contains 46 references) (KFT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 459 633

NOTES ON LITERACY

VOLUME 25.1-2 **JANUARY 1999**

CONTENTS

Articles

Long Words	Ursula Weisemann	1
Introduction to a Bilingual Schooling Typology through Three Examples	Scott McCracken	5
The Challenge of Introducing the First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) into the Philippine Formal Education Program	Catherine Young	25

Review

The Politics of Writing by Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič	reviewed by Linda Seyer	39

FL801490

SIL INTERNATIONAL
7500 WEST CAMP WISDOM ROAD
DALLAS, TEXAS 75236

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Shell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

NOTES ON
LITERACY

Volume 25, Number 3 & 4 **September 1999**

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

The Cultural Impact of Literacy
Julie Nelson 1

Thoughts on the REFLECT Approach, Literacy, and Community Development in Ethnic Minority Language Groups Dennis and Susan Malone 11

Literacy Programs: Getting the Ideology Right
Keith Berry 31

SIL International
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236-5628

NOTES ON LITERACY

Volume 25, Number 3 & 4 September 1999

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

The Cultural Impact of Literacy
Julie Nelson 1

Thoughts on the REFLECT Approach, Literacy, and Community Development in Ethnic Minority Language Groups
Dennis and Susan Malone 11

Literacy Programs: Getting the Ideology Right
Keith Berry 31

FL801490

SIL International
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236-5628

Notes on Literacy is published quarterly by SIL International and serves field literacy programs by sharing information of a practical and theoretical nature with literacy field workers. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily express official policy of SIL International. Permission to use articles, either in full or in part, must be obtained from the editor.

International Literacy Coordinator: Pat Kelley
NOL Editor: Judith D. Moine-Boothe
Compositor: Rhonda L. Hartell

Subscriptions, standing orders, and back issues should be placed with:

International Academic Bookstore
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236, USA
Phone: (972) 708-7404
Fax: (972) 708-7433
E-mail: academic_books@sil.org

Subscriptions: This quarterly publication is available as an annual subscription at the following prices:

Within the U.S. (delivered by the U.S. Postal Service): US$20.95
Outside the U.S. (delivered by DHL-Air): US$23.95

Individual issues: Individual copies of available issues are US$3.00 each, plus a minimum of US$2.75 handling (which generally covers about three issues). Not all back issues are still available.

Ordering information: Prepayment is requested from individuals; reseller and institutional purchase orders are accepted. Payment must be in U.S. funds, and checks must be drawn on a U.S. bank. Major credit cards are welcomed; to pay by credit card please include the account number and expiration date. Electronic transfers are not accepted.

Readers are invited to submit inquiries, comments, or manuscripts for publication to:

Editor, *Notes on Literacy*
c/o SIL; P.O. Box 44456
Nairobi, KENYA
E-mail: judy_boothe@sil.org

Submit copies of manuscripts on computer media (MS-DOS or MAC format) along with a paper copy of the manuscript. Please include a brief biographical note with any manuscript. See inside back cover for details.

ISSN 0737-6707
© 2000 SIL International
All rights reserved

Notes on Literacy 25.3&4:1–10.

The Cultural Impact of Literacy

Julie Nelson

Julie Nelson attended Grinnell College in Iowa where she majored in Spanish. She became a member of SIL International in 1996. Julie served with SIL in the Mexico branch for about eight months doing survey, training, and literacy. She hopes to begin studying the Xanaguía Zapotec language, but until then, she is working towards a master's degree at the University of Texas, Arlington.

1. Introduction

In the last few decades, there has been an apparent shrinking of the world. Due largely to political upheaval and insufficient resources in rural areas, the amount of contact minority people groups have had with the outside world has dramatically increased. It is not uncommon in today's global society to find speakers of minority languages in major urban areas, both in their country of origin and in foreign countries. Because of this globalization and urbanization, the cultural identity of minority communities is changing. There is, however, a desire to see the cultures of these people maintained. In academic circles, a frequent issue of debate is how to preserve the cultural identity of minority peoples. The opinions on this issue range from creating "outsider-free" zones where sections of land are guarded so that no non-native person can enter, to trying to help the minority people learn to function in the national community by immersing them in the national language and culture. One issue of discussion is the role literacy plays in cultural change. Should literacy be promoted in oral cultures? Does it preserve a culture or destroy it?

Dennis Malone, in his article, "Dear Nolly…: Ruminations on the effects and practice of literacy in traditional societies" argues that cultural preservation is impossible. Whether or not literacy is introduced will not change the reality that cultures change. What needs to be discussed instead is whether literacy brings a positive or negative change to a society (Malone 1994). He notes that literacy is not a change agent introduced into a society while its members sit passively by. For literacy to take place, the members of a society must participate in the process of learning to read and write. To determine the effect that literacy has on oral cultures, a broad spectrum of societal elements must be considered. Much research has been conducted on the impact that literacy makes upon oral cultures, but generally these studies look only at one element of culture. To adequately evaluate a cultural innovation, various aspects of the culture must be considered.

This article will examine the effects that literacy has on three elements of culture. First, its psychological impact will be considered. The changes that occur in the mind affect the individual first, but as many individuals are changed, the culture changes as a whole. Next, the impact of literacy on the social structure of a community will be considered. Finally, developmental changes caused by literacy will be discussed. This article will affirm the reality that literacy causes cultural change, but it will show that the benefits of this cultural innovation far outweigh the costs.

2. Psychological impact of literacy

When considering the impact of literacy on culture, a study of how learning to read affects the mind of the individual is necessary. Because a culture is made up of individuals, if there is a major change in the way many individuals think, the culture will be changed. Walter Ong is one of the better-known commentators on the psychological impacts of literacy on oral peoples. This article will discuss three of his observations: the impact of literacy on memory, its impact on methods of reasoning, and its impact on the understanding of meaning.

2.1 Memory

In a preliterate culture, the use of one's memory is an integral part of communication. In a literate society, however, the use of memory is not essential, nor is it common. Because information can be stored on a piece of paper, it does not need to be stored in the mind. In an oral culture, memorization is necessary for communication and sharing of information. Memorization, however, is not necessarily the verbatim recitation that literate cultures hold to. Oral texts, which are used to entertain as well as to impart knowledge of the culture, traditions, and current news, make use of mnemonic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, and formulas (Ong 1982). The exact recitation of these stories and texts is not required. The orator takes the story and puts it in a framework of his or her own formulae. The resulting story communicates the required information but in the style of the speaker.

In a literate society, the concept of memorization changes. When a text is written, it has a decided form. Therefore, the memorization of that text needs to be exactly as it was written. The speaker is no longer in control of the text, rather the text controls the speaker. "Learning to read and write disables the oral poet....It introduces into his mind the concept of a text as controlling the narrative and thereby interferes with the oral composing processes" (Ong 1982:59). The introduction of literacy into a culture affects the concept of memorization and hinders the creativity of oral poets. When oral cultures rely more and more on written texts for their entertainment and information, the creativity involved in memorization becomes obsolete.

2.2 Abstract reasoning

The way the mind deals with concepts changes from oral to written cultures. In oral cultures, concepts are considered on a situational level and not on a broader, abstract level. Ong (1982) cites a study by A. R. Luria to illustrate this point. In his study, Luria questioned illiterate and literate people on a variety of topics. He found that illiterate people, when given a list of objects, were not able to state, which did not belong. The literate people were able to group the words "hammer," "saw," and "hatchet" together, while excluding the word "log". Illiterates, on the other hand, were not able to distinguish the tools from the non-tool because the tools are used on the log. In another test, Luria looked at the logic skills of the literates versus the illiterates. When given the information that precious metals do not rust and that gold is a precious metal then asked if gold rusts, the literates had no problem answering that gold does not rust, whereas the illiterates were unable to answer the question correctly.

Ong explains that the issue at hand is one of familiarity. "An oral culture simply does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorization, formal logical reasoning processes, definitions, or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis…" (p. 55). When a person learns to read and write, they begin to organize their world in a different manner. They are forced to develop skills that are more abstract, such as understanding that symbols can be put together to represent words and texts that contain meaning. This change in thinking develops the skill of abstract reasoning.

This aspect of psychological change as a result of literacy, in particular, has been challenged. Evidence has been presented that questions whether literacy is what causes these psychological changes or if the changes are caused by education. A study of the Vai people of Liberia seeks to answer this question. The Vai people have two different scripts, one that is taught in the schools and the other taught at home. Sherri Rae Clark discusses this study, saying that by studying the effects of literacy in the Vai culture, it is possible to separate the effects of literacy from the effects of education. "Scribner and Cole (1981) found little evidence that literacy per se caused transformations in cognitive processes. Schooling had much greater impact" (Clark 1984:LL[1]). So there is some doubt as to the amount of impact literacy has on the development of analytical thinking. It cannot be denied, however, that because literacy does involve creating associations between symbols and sounds, a certain amount of abstract reasoning skills is developed.

2.3 Understanding of meaning

In written cultures, dictionaries have been created to standardize meaning. The meanings that dictionaries archive are based on history. These definitions are almost entirely composed of other words. When there is doubt of the meaning of a word, written societies turn to the dictionary to find its definition and confide in that meaning. It affects how, and in what context, a word will be used. In contrast, oral societies, where dictionaries do not exist, base meaning only on the present use of the word. Meaning in oral cultures is not comprised only of other words, rather, it is made up of gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflection. A word's meaning is based on the contexts in which it is, at present, being used. Because of this, Ong argues that oral societies live in the present. Historical information that is no longer relevant is disregarded. This implies that "the integrity of the past [becomes] subordinate to the integrity of the present" (Ong 1982:48). In other words, truth is based on what is known at the time. Stories can be altered to present what is believed to be true in the present, whereas in cultures with writing, the past has been made concrete; it is harder to change facts to make them agree with what is believed in the present. Words maintain "layers" of meaning, even though many of those layers are not in common use. Meaning can only be changed or erased over long periods of time, as the layers become so obsolete that they are no longer valid.

3. Sociological impact of literacy

In considering the effects that literacy has on oral cultures, it is necessary to examine how societies as a whole have been changed, both for the positive and for the negative. Surprisingly, little study has been done on the positive effects that literacy has had in the social structures of oral peoples. Two positive results of literacy that have been observed in several areas are a higher view of self and culture and unification of ethnic groups.

---

[1] Editor's note: The author has quoted material from a computer program (LinguaLinks) which does not include the original page numbers from the cited material. I have indicated such references with the initials, LL, to indicate LinguaLinks. Biographical data on this computer program is listed in the references section under Summer Institute of Linguistics.

3.1 Positive effects

James Daggett and Mary Ruth Wise have studied the effects literacy has had on a variety of language groups in Peruvian Amazonia. For many centuries, Peruvian tribal groups have been exploited and cheated. Traditionally, their education has been in Spanish, even though they do not understand it. "Each year the children returned illiterate, the barrier of Spanish language and culture too high for them to hurdle. After many years of this, the Chayahuita concluded that they were inferior, lacking the capacity to read like Spanish speakers" (Daggett and Wise 1992:LL). When a bilingual school was opened and people began to learn to read and write in their own language, their self-image was dramatically improved. The realization that their language was readable and transcribable helped the Chayahuita realize that their culture is not inferior to the dominant Spanish-speaking culture and that their language has value.

Another positive effect that has been observed in several areas as a result of literacy is the unification of language groups. "Part of the task of committing a language to writing is the selection of the most suitable dialect, since not all dialects can be written, and some are more central, prestigious, or easily understood than others" (Langdon 1997:23). As a result of the standardization of language through a writing system, speakers of different variants of a common language can begin to identify with each other, because they share a writing system. This phenomenon has been observed in Peruvian Amazonia. "There is an increased sense of ethnic identity and unity....This is substantiated by the appearance of organizations serving the entire group and by the development of literature and an improved self-image" (Daggett and Wise 1992:LL).

3.2 Negative effects

Along with the positive social changes that have been observed to take place when literacy is introduced into oral communities, several negative factors have also been noted. While literacy has frequently brought unity to language groups, occasionally different dialects want to have their own set of materials. Rather than coming together as a language group, the variant dialects separate themselves from the "standard dialect".

In these cases, instead of increasing ethnic identity, literacy has served to divide it. In addition to dividing ethnic groups, the introduction of reading and writing can also bring about division within a community because of an increase in individualization.

In oral societies, all communication is through interaction. Without writing, communication cannot take place except through personal contact. Writing, on the other hand, allows information gathering to be done alone. Reading, although it can happen in groups, is normally an individual event.

The members of a society, instead of interacting with each other, are able to isolate themselves. Whereas in oral cultures, entertainment happens as a community, "most daily activities are informal and oral" (Mogre 1987:LL); in written societies that sense of group is not necessary for entertainment. Because of literacy, a culture that traditionally would value interpersonal interaction begins to grow more individualistic. The sense of group identity can grow weaker, because there is no longer a focus on personal interaction for learning and entertainment.

In an oral culture, knowledge is shared interpersonally. Because of literature, there need not be personal contact when knowledge is imparted. Writing "separates the knower from the known and from other knowers. The individual acquires…a primacy in literate cultures unknown in oral cultures" (Clark 1984:LL). In addition, in an oral culture, since the collective knowledge of a people is entirely what the individuals know and remember, any one member can have a fairly large knowledge base relative to the total stock of cultural knowledge. In written cultures, since the memorization of information is not necessary and because of the vast amount of technical knowledge that has been acquired through research, the collective amount of knowledge of a society is as large as its literary base. "The mere size of the literate repertoire means that the proportion of the whole which any one individual knows must be infinitesimal in comparison with what obtains in oral culture…[thus the] individual [is prevented] from participating fully in the total cultural tradition to anything like the extent possible in non-literate society" (Goody and Watt 1968:57). Because the percentage of information that any one individual can know is so small, there is a sense of alienation and distancing within the culture. There is no longer a central knowledge base, rather everyone has a command of a distinct, small section of the corporate knowledge.

In addition to the isolation and distancing that can take place between the members of a society when it becomes literate, a shift in child/adult relations has also been observed. "The role of the aged becomes weakened. The literate persons who are knowledgeable question the authority of the old" (Mogre 1987:LL). This happens because of the new information gathering skills that are learned. Instead of relying on the teachings of their elders, children learn through reading. They are then able to refute what they had been taught by the older people of their community. In Samoa, schools have furthered the age conflict (Duranti and Ochs 1986). Traditional Samoan culture gives greater respect to the elders than to the children. Children are expected to accommodate their behavior and speech when relating to adults. The teaching of literacy has brought Western teaching techniques into the classroom. "In the classroom, the adult verbally accommodates (in terms of simplification and clarification) to the child to a greater extent than do adults outside this setting. In the classroom, the interactions are more child-centered; in other village settings, the interactions are more adult-centered. The net result is a shift in social expectations surrounding the roles of adult and child" (Duranti and Ochs 1986:227).

On the social level, there are significant changes brought about by the introduction of literacy in oral cultures. On the positive side, literacy can bring a higher view of the culture by demonstrating that the language is just as good as any written language. Literacy can also unify divergent dialectal groups. Negatively, though, literacy can cause an increase in individualism and distance and can upset the adult/child role. These negative factors need to be weighed, because they significantly affect the society.

4. Developmental impact of literacy

An adequate study of the effects that literacy has on oral cultures cannot be complete without a look at its effects on development. Development can be defined as "a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment" (South Commission 1990:10). Literacy, in and of itself should not be considered development, rather the inherent results that come from literacy. "The mere capacity to read and write will not in itself bring about development of any kind. The use of that capacity is crucial" (Robinson 1992: LL).

4.1 Empowerment

Through literacy, people groups are empowered. For people who have been exploited by the outside world, literacy is the key to breaking that dominance. "Literacy is seen as an aspect of power distribution. Promoting literacy among the disadvantaged has the purpose of increasing their bargaining skills and therefore their power vis-à-vis exploitative structures and people" (Robinson 1992: LL). It is through literacy that communities can learn the rights that they have as citizens of their country. This empowerment can be seen in the indigenous groups of Peru. "Peruvian ethnic groups cannot escape [exploitation]: they cannot even initiate a just and fair dialogue with the governing civilization if they do not possess this weapon (literacy), the most powerful one in the Western world" (Ortiz in Daggett and Wise 1992:LL).

Historically, the tribal people of Peru have not known their rights. Many did not know how to count above three, and therefore they could not stand their own in business deals. They were defenseless to the encroachment of outsiders. Since literacy has been introduced, organizations have grown up amongst them, and they have had the power to lobby the government and demand their rights. Ideally, the Peruvian Amazon peoples would not have so much contact with outside forces, but the reality of the situation is that contact has come and will continue to affect their communities. According to Daggett and Wise (1992:LL), the "ability to relate to the pressures of outsiders is essential to the preservation of an ethnic group," and that ability will only happen through literacy.

Only as literate communities can these people groups adequately deal with the pressures of the outside. Through literacy, communities defend themselves, and they speak out for themselves. Literacy gives communities a public voice. "Literacy is about having an outlet for your own view of the world" (McCaffery in Hamilton and Barton 1989:35). Having a public voice is key to self-preservation. Without literacy, a community has no public voice. Without a public voice, a community is powerless against the outside world.

4.2 Women and literacy

It can be argued that the group most benefited by literacy is women, but overcoming the cultural forces that block women from learning to read and write is a significant task. The main obstacle that blocks women's literacy is the role of women in traditional male-dominated societies (Latif 1996). Women are relegated to the background of society. They are expected to be virtuous wives and mothers who care for their families; their role is therefore in the home. Women's literacy threatens that status quo. Practically, caring for a family is time-consuming. Women who have the responsibility of caring for children and husbands have little, if any, free time after gathering wood, cooking, cleaning, caring for crops, and any other responsibilities they may have. This problem is multiplied by early marriage. Girls, who would normally have opportunities for education, marry and have children at a young age. In addition, literacy is seen as being just for men. Culturally, it is more appropriate for men to learn to read and write than for women. Men are seen as having a greater ability to learn to read and a greater earning potential than women. If a family can afford to send only one person to school, it will be a male.

But, when these obstacles are overridden, "women's education, [it has been found] plays an important role in reducing infant mortality, increasing the life expectancy of future generations, and improving child rearing and development" (Sands 1995:21). Since women are typically the caretakers of the family, increasing their health and hygiene practices has a direct influence on the health of the upcoming generations. Through literacy, women can learn how to care for themselves and others. One study showed that "a one percent increase in women's literacy rate is three times more effective in reducing infant mortality than a one percent increase in the number of doctors" (p. 21). Increased knowledge in nutrition, disease control, and general health practice greatly affects the health of a community.

Literacy among women also has been found to encourage the education of future generations. "Literacy makes women very conscientious and committed to the education of the next generation; it helps them to encourage their own children in their studies" (Sands 1995:23). When a woman learns to read, she is more likely to encourage her children to persevere in education. Since she has learned to read through time and effort, she knows how to relate to her children in the learning process and can encourage them to continue. Also, mothers who have learned to read are able to read to their children, which in turn, encourages them to learn to read.

In many societies, women take on the majority of the household work. They are responsible for the well being of their family, meaning they have to work all through the day and late into the night. In many societies, they are exploited and looked down upon. Literacy "enables women to increase their self-confidence, improve their self-esteem, become aware of their civil rights, improve their income-earning capabilities, and play an active role in family and community decision making. Literacy is a means for women to participate on equal terms in the process of social development and change, therefore, literacy is a tool for women's empowerment" (Sands 1995:24). As in communities as a whole, women are empowered by literacy. Literacy increases their knowledge of the world and their rights within the world. Being able to read impacts the health of entire communities, since women are the main caregivers in families.

5. Conclusion

The reality that literacy affects culture both for the positive and for the negative cannot be denied. On a cognitive level, literacy alters society. How the mind sees the world and processes it is changed. Socially, roles are redefined and the concept of a social community is altered. At the same time, the society's self-image is strengthened. Developmentally, literacy empowers communities and individuals and gives a foundation for development in health and agriculture. If cultures were isolated and had no contact with each other, it could be argued that literacy has an overall negative effect on cultures. However, the world, as it is today, is not made up of many isolated people groups. Communities interact with each other. The technological world has not created a sanctuary for preliterate peoples, rather it has sought to use and exploit those cultures for its own benefit. Given this reality, literacy is essential for maintaining ethnic identity. Because of the amount of crosscultural contact in today's world, it is clear that the benefits of literacy far outweigh the costs.

References

Clark, S. R. 1984. Speech versus writing. Notes on Literacy 43.1–11.

Daggett, J., and M. R. Wise. 1992. Social consequences of literacy in representative ethnic groups of Peruvian Amazonia. Notes on Literacy 18.4:1–14.

Duranti, A. and E. Ochs. 1986. Literacy instruction in a Samoan village. In B. Schieffelin and P. Gilmore (eds.), The acquisition of literacy: Ethnographic perspectives, 213–232. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing.

Goody, J. and I. Watt. 1968. The consequences of literacy. In J. Goody (ed.), Literacy in traditional societies, 27–68. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamilton, M. and D. Barton. 1985. Research and practice in adult literacy. Sheffield, England: Association for Recurrent Education.

Langdon, Margaret. 1997. The place of mother tongue literacy in social development in three African contexts. Notes on Literacy 23.4:1–44.

Latif, A. H. 1996. Theory and practice of women's literacy in Bangladesh: Problems and issues. In C. Medel-Añonuevo (ed.), Women reading the world: Policies and practices of literacy in Asia (UIE Studies 6), 115–118. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Malone, Dennis. 1994. "Dear Nolly....": Ruminations on the effects and practice of literacy in traditional societies. Notes on Literacy 20.2:35–58.

Mogre, S. 1987. From preliterate to literate: Some social implications. Notes on Literacy, Special Issue 2:16–19.

Ong, W. J. 1982. Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word. London: Methuen.

Robinson, C. 1992. Literacy and development—An inquiry. Notes on Literacy 18.4:31–43.

Sands, J. 1995. The impact of literacy on women and development: Case studies from South Asia. Notes on Literacy 21.4:18–28.

Scribner, S. and M. Cole. 1981. The psychology of literacy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

South Commission. 1990. The challenge to the South: Report of the South Commission. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Summer Institute of Linguistics. 1998. LinguaLinks version 2.5: Electronic helps for language field work (computer program). Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Notes on Literacy 25.3&4:11–30.

Thoughts on the REFLECT Approach: Literacy, and Community Development in Ethnic Minority Language Groups

Dennis and Susan Malone

Dennis and Susan Malone are literacy specialists with SIL. In the 1980s they assisted the Kaugel people of Papua New Guinea in developing a community-based literacy program and later were "loaned" to the government of Papua New Guinea to help establish a nationwide literacy program for that country. Currently they are coordinating SIL's literacy efforts in the Asia Area. Both have Ph.D.'s in education from Indiana University, USA.

1. Introduction

Actionaid, an international nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Great Britain, promotes the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) as "a radical approach to literacy and social change." In late 1998 we attended the "First REFLECT Global Conference" in Orissa State, India. This was preceded by a visit to REFLECT field sites in Bangladesh (October 24–November 8).

Interest in the REFLECT approach has been kindled among SIL members as a result of the growing number of literacy programs that are components of larger community development projects. *Notes on Literacy* has published two articles on REFLECT, both of which provide critiques of the approach: Seyer (1997) from a theoretical point of view, and Herbert and Holman (1998) from the vantage point of its use in an SIL and Actionaid project in Ghana. Our participation in the REFLECT Global Conference and field site visits were our effort to gain firsthand knowledge of the approach and to assess the ways—if any—it could be used or adapted for SIL-related community development projects. We will try not to duplicate the content of the two articles mentioned above. Rather, we will add to it our own critique, including a recommendation that more experimentation with the REFLECT approach be given serious consideration in SIL-related projects.

An approach to literacy that its promoters characterize as "radical" generally gets short shrift in the more conservative and "apolitical" NGOs like

SIL.[1] However, the merits of a new and innovative approach to literacy among the world's marginalized people deserves an open-minded reception, if for no other reason than that it has been developed for the very communities SIL pledges to serve and support.

The following is a description of the REFLECT approach as presented by Actionaid staff and writers, an assessment of the approach as viewed in field visits in Bangladesh, a discussion of advantages and disadvantages, as viewed from an Asia Area perspective, and, finally, a set of recommendations for further study and use.

2. The REFLECT approach

Actionaid pays regular homage to Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and philosopher whose social and political consciousness-raising approach to literacy among the poor and oppressed populations of Brazil and elsewhere raised him to prominence in the field of literacy in the 1970s. His ideas regarded the use of primer-based literacy as a means of "domesticating" the poor, i.e., encouraging them to accept their oppressed status rather than take action to secure what is rightfully theirs.[2] He criticized traditional primer-based literacy methods for their "banking-concept" of the learning process; the teacher makes "deposits" to the students' "knowledge" accounts which the students receive passively. The Freirean approach focused on "dialogue" between a facilitator and the learners using "generative" words taken from the adult learners' daily existence. These words usually had socio-political significance and were used to problematize existing power relationships. Freire's approach was quite successful in Brazil where it originated, so much so that when a right wing coup brought the military to power, Freire became a *persona non grata* and was forced to live the next decade or so in exile.

Since the 1970s, the Freirean approach has been adapted for use in widely differing government and nongovernment literacy efforts, including UNESCO's APPEAL program.[3] However, the approach as conceived by

---

[1] Some scholars consider an "apolitical" position to be a fiction, especially with respect to individuals' and groups' actions (or inactions) toward the powers-that-be. In their view, an NGO that publicly opposes a government whose policies and actions disenfranchise the poor is no more political than one which refuses to interfere. In effect, the latter endorses the status quo (as in a court of law, silence is construed as affirmation). The issue has moral and ethical implications for all of us who are working in minority language communities. We, therefore, need to be involved in the conversation rather than simply dismissing it as "leftist" or "radical".

[2] This is not necessarily the Actionaid authors' interpretation. A literacy program that focuses on giving poor people access to the Scriptures is also likely to promote consciousness-raising and critical thinking, although not necessarily using the same methods of engagement.

[3] APPEAL = Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All.

Freire has failed more often than not because of the high demand it places on minimally trained facilitators to generate consciousness-raising dialogue among adult learners. Freire's literacy instruction worked well in Portuguese (with its open syllables and phonemic alphabet) but not so well with the more difficult orthographies and syllable patterns of language communities in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific, and Asia, thus, the need for a "regenerated" Freirean literacy.

The REFLECT approach incorporates the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in an effort to reduce the pressures on facilitators to generate relevant dialogue with adult learners. PRA techniques include, for example, participatory mapping of the local community in which the learners construct on a cleared, bare piece of ground, a map of the local community using sticks, stones, seeds, leaves, twigs, whatever is locally available, to represent such things as households, water sources, gardens, livestock, roads, and bridges. The process of creating this map includes ongoing discussion of what goes where and serves to stimulate a discussion of local problems (e.g., distant water sources, diminishing forests, lack of sanitation, flooding). The learners—formed into "circles" both in the literal sense of sitting in a circle and in the sense of a meeting of peers—construct the map, redoing aspects that are considered inaccurate, until the group is agreed that the map accurately represents their community's reality.

The facilitator then assists the learners in transferring the map to a large sheet of brown paper (or its equivalent) for a more permanent record of the group discussion and deliberations. Pictures and symbols are used to represent houses, household members, water sources (e.g., pumps, wells, springs), fields, gardens, forests, and livestock. This map becomes the basis of further discussions ("action points") regarding ways in which the problems that have been identified can be resolved.

The learners then identify words they want to learn to read that are associated with the concerns that have been raised in their dialogues with the facilitator and each other. The facilitator writes the word for the learners, breaking it down to its component syllables and helping them to read the word. This part of the REFLECT approach is not structured in any traditional educational sense of the term. The words are chosen, more or less randomly, by the learners based on their own interests and discussion. Each learner is provided with an exercise book and encouraged to reproduce the group graphics in them, along with the "generative" words they have identified and which have been written for them by the facilitator. In our field visits to REFLECT sites in Bangladesh, this instructional process included only syllable and alphabet methods, that is, the words were broken down into syllables and pronounced, or the words were broken down to syllables and the symbol names of the syllable were identified and then pronounced as a word (e.g., in English, *go:* "go....gee oh....go"). The facilitator may then use the word in a sentence and write that down for the learners to copy into their exercise books as motivated. Examination of exercise books in the groups we visited indicated that individual learners were free to draw and write whatever interested them. No set drills or patterns were observed. The few individuals that we were able to query were able to explain their diagrams and read the words and sentences they had copied.

Other PRA techniques used include matrices, calendars, and diagrams that represent "local reality" and facilitate dialogue. A typical MATRIX is the "division of labor" grid which breaks the typical day into several segments, then matches them against male and female chores or labor. Another gender-related matrix chart related to who makes household and family decisions on various issues. Calendars divide different community activities among the twelve months of the year. One type of diagram (called a "chapati diagram" because of the use of circles resembling a South Asian bread) depicts credit sources that are available to group members by placing the sources in close or more distant proximity on the diagram, based on the members' feeling of the credit source's accessibility and openness to them and their needs.

All of these are considered "empowering community techniques" to the extent that they enable the circle members to identify problems, discuss possible solutions, and plan appropriate courses of action.

The use of the PRA techniques seems to have greatly improved facilitator training. In the REFLECT circles we visited in Bangladesh, the group members very readily articulated how the different maps, matrices, diagrams, and calendars facilitated discussions of local issues of concern to the members and encouraged them to plan courses of action.

On the other hand, the actual literacy instruction seems to be a secondary concern in the approach, as is the training of facilitators to integrate more participatory and systematic instructional techniques into the approach. Nevertheless, all the REFLECT circles we visited in Bangladesh had members who had acquired considerable literacy skills in a period of less than a year.

3. Field visits: Bangladesh

Actionaid–Bangladesh organized field visits for thirty-six REFLECT Conference participants from UK, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The participants were divided into six groups and visited six different sectors of Bangladesh. Our group drove about 300 kilometers northwest of Dhaka to Rangpur, from which we visited nine REFLECT circles and the two cooperating NGOs over a period of three days. These visits inform the following observations about the REFLECT approach and its viability for community development-centered literacy efforts in SIL-related projects.

3.1 The REFLECT circles in Bangladesh

All the REFLECT circles were created within existing development-related programs sponsored by other NGOs. The REFLECT circles were supported and supervised by the sponsoring NGO with assistance in training and evaluation from Actionaid–Bangladesh. Each trainer trained and supervised facilitators for fifteen circles. Each circle was limited to a maximum of twenty-five participants. Of the nine circles visited, eight were for women and had female facilitators while one was for men with a male facilitator. All of the circles chosen for visits were a considerable distance from the NGO centers and were among the better circles as judged by the Actionaid evaluators (i.e., all were graded "A" in a range from A to C).

3.2 Training for REFLECT in Bangladesh

Since we were not able to observe any REFLECT training activities, a written account of Actionaid's approach to training was provided by the REFLECT Coordination Unit (RCU) of Actionaid–Bangladesh.

> Training is regarded as the key to the capacity building of the REFLECT personnel. Before starting the REFLECT circles, the trainers and the facilitators were provided with Training of Trainers (ToT) and Training of Facilitators (ToF) for the period of 15 and 10 days, respectively. The ToT is conducted by the RCU with support from other trainers of the partner NGOs. The trainers are instrumental to developing capacity of the facilitators. Apart from this, the trainers are regularly meeting in the trainer's forums which are organized after every 3-4 months in a rotating fashion for 4 days each.
>
> Facilitators also meet together once in every month for a day....The REFLECT trainers are not only playing the role of trainer but also playing the roles of capacity developer, academic supervisor, program developer, researcher, and advocacy worker. Each trainer is also provided with PRA and GAD[4] training as supplementary to the ToT in REFLECT (Actionaid, p. 1).

Our field visits confirmed that the facilitators have been trained in the PRA and GAD techniques, as the same PRA maps and charts were reproduced in circles over a wide-spread area, and all of them featured gender-awareness activities. In fact, the systematic reproduction of the same graphics, rendering the same conclusions, and similar action plans suggests a more uniform training than one would expect for a participatory approach that is meant to address the unique situations of diverse populations. We, as outside observers, were simultaneously impressed with the success of PRA techniques as focal points for group discussion and action and perplexed that the nature and outcomes of those discussions and actions were so uniformly predictable.

---

[4] GAD = Gender Awareness Development

Trainers face other difficulties trying to implement the REFLECT approach. The RCU materials characterize the Trainer as the facilitator's "friend, philosopher, and facilitator" (Actionaid, p. 2). However, in all eight circles we observed that were facilitated by women, the trainer was male and positioned himself beside the facilitator to direct her as she was demonstrating the approach to our observation group.

As mentioned above, one reason the Freirean approach to literacy needed to be "regenerated" was because of the inherent difficulty in training facilitators to be as flexible, informed, nonmanipulative, and able to engage in meaningful dialogue as a fellow learner rather than as an authority/teacher figure. We were unable to observe the degree to which this critical aspect of the REFLECT approach has succeeded, because at each circle the trainer or one of the Actionaid or other national NGO staff traveling with us intervened and took over the role of facilitator, for the most part leaving the local facilitator passively observing on the sidelines. The few uninterrupted occasions of facilitating we did get to observe led us to believe that they are indeed trained in the dialogic model and are, generally speaking, able to stay within it, at least up to the point of direct literacy or numeracy instruction, at which point they tend to revert back to the traditional classroom model of teacher-student.

All in all, we were quite impressed with the facilitators but feel that they had only a superficial understanding of the underlying principles and philosophy of the approach and less understanding of the educational problems involved in literacy acquisition. In each circle, the facilitators generated the same kind of graphics with the same interpretations and the same results. Part of this may be attributed to the fact that the trainers who demonstrate the PRA and GAD techniques for the facilitators have never themselves facilitated a REFLECT circle. Thus, they probably cannot provide the kind of modeling that demonstrates the flexibility and creativity needed for a truly participatory and empowering approach. Even so, the esprit de corps of the circles spoke well for what the facilitators accomplished with a limited amount of training. More experience and an improved apprenticeship-type training program could build an even greater capacity for innovation in the facilitators [see Recommendations below].

3.3 The REFLECT circles

3.3.1 Background study. According to the RCU, each one-year phase of the REFLECT program consists of a nine-month REFLECT course preceded by a preparatory three months in which background study is conducted to determine the status of language, literacy, numeracy, and the socio-economic makeup of the community. The background study is conducted by the implementing organization (in the case of our field visits this would be the Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services and the Islamic Relief Worldwide) with assistance from the RCU. During this time the facilitators are selected, the training conducted, and the circle learners chosen. "The main objective of doing such a background survey is to acquaint with the type of dialect, the style of indigenous numeracy, and the nature of different socio-economic and cultural conditions of the area. The findings of the background survey are utilized in the REFLECT course" (Actionaid, p. 2).

We did not observe the use of the background study as a way of incorporating indigenous numeracy into the REFLECT program or of identifying the "different" socio-economic and cultural conditions. At one circle, the facilitator wrote a series of double-digit addition problems on the chalkboard and had the learners write and answer the problems in their notebooks. The numbers were written in the Bengali script, but it appeared that several of the learners calculated the correct answers as they came over to show us their work. This was a primary school-type exercise, decontextualized and meaningless other than as a repetition drill.

The replication of the same issues charts and diagrams from one REFLECT circle to another also seemed to indicate a set "curriculum" rather than a flexible situation-specific dialogue. Nevertheless, the PRA graphics seemed to be uniformly effective in stimulating discussion among the participants.

With respect to cultural conditions, in several circles the women indicated that one of their "action points" was to send their daughters to school now rather than arrange early marriages for them. However, when asked what grades their daughters are in, they replied, "Grade 5." Thus, the decision to send the girls to school predated the REFLECT program by at least four years and would not have been the result of participating in the REFLECT circle. At least some of the issues ascribed to the REFLECT background study seem to have been previously identified and addressed by the community, a likely occurrence since the sponsoring NGO had been conducting development-related programs for years prior to the advent of REFLECT.

3.3.2 How the REFLECT approach works. The circle begins with participants "visualizing their crucial problems through constructing graphics...on the ground using locally available materials" (Actionaid, p. 2). The graphic is then transferred from the ground to a large sheet of paper. The graphic is then used to generate an issue for discussion and action. The graphics include "maps of households, land use, land tenancy, calendars of gender workloads, illnesses or income, matrices to analyze local crops, credit sources, use of participation in local organizations" (p. 2), usually a total of fifteen to twenty by the end of the literacy course. Examples of all of these types of graphics were observed in our visits.

"After the discussion a key word (generative word/lead sentence/text) is introduced for literacy acquisition" (p. 2). The more graphics that are produced, the broader the range of learner-generated vocabulary available for participants to use for reading and writing. Other sources of literacy materials are also used including real-world materials, songs, drama, poems, and proverbs.[5] "There is an emphasis on writing and active construction of texts rather than passive reading" (p. 2). In practice, some of the writing is "passive" in the sense that participants are encouraged to copy the various graphics into their notebooks. The fact that the participants have actively participated in the creation of the graphic material they copy removes the mindlessness of traditional copying activities. The notebooks we observed included a lot of graphics (including some original ones), in addition to words, phrases, sentences, and numeracy activities. In fact, the advanced literacy skills exhibited by some of the participants after only 2-3 months of REFLECT caused us to question whether all the participants entered the program as preliterates.[6]

By the end of a nine-month course, a REFLECT circle "will have produced more than fifteen to twenty graphics and each participant will have a copy of these in their exercise 'khata' (notebook), together with phrases they have written" (p. 2). This, also, was observed in notebooks that we looked at in several of the circles. The participants' notebooks then become more than "copy books" of decontextualized drills and words. They constitute of record of the group's dialogue and discussion on various issues of local importance in a form that participants can read and share with others when so motivated. "Meanwhile the organization which has promoted the literacy program can also end up with a detailed survey of the conditions, needs, and attitudes of the people of every village (which might take years to produce using other methods). As participants construct their own materials, so they take ownership of the issues [that] come up as well and often take local action, change their behavior or their attitudes" (p. 2).

---

[5] We did not observe this in the circles we visited. That is not to say that it is not done. We did observe it in a nonformal education project—not REFLECT—sponsored by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) that has been in operation for over a decade. During our visit to the project, two young women volunteered to sing traditional songs, and one of them performed an impromptu traditional dance that included intricate steps and movements. Thus, the intrinsic value of these activities in the eyes and hearts of the people make them potentially powerful vehicles for a holistic literacy and development approach that seeks to empower the participants.

[6] This suspicion was strengthened when REFLECT organizers from other fields reported the custom of literate villagers signing up as illiterate participants, because there is usually no other alternative education or development activities in the community for them. Nevertheless, if the interest generated among participants by the REFLECT approach is as genuine as it appears to be, and circles are meeting regularly and often (as per the six times a week group referred to above), then exceptional progress may not be so surprising

Our observations were too limited to confirm this aspect of the REFLECT approach in any generalized way. However, the little we did see and hear predisposes us to believe that the claimed results have corollaries in reality, at least in Bangladesh.

3.3.3 Supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. Although there is no built-in supervision of REFLECT circles in Bangladesh, the trainer-of-facilitators, working with fifteen circles, becomes the de facto supervisor, but ostensibly more "a friend, philosopher, and facilitator" (p. 2). In an approach that rests so heavily on "participatory" modes of operation, a "supervisor" is somewhat out of place. However, the relationships demonstrated between the trainer and the facilitator in five of the eight circles we visited, would easily fall under the definition of supervisor, with the trainer offering unsolicited advice and direction to the facilitator and the facilitator deferring to the trainer. This trainer-facilitator relationship, it should be noted, was always male-to-female. Traditional roles may be superseding the roles and gender awareness promoted in the REFLECT approach. This underscores the great difficulty, in a hierarchical male-dominated society, of training trainers and facilitators in egalitarian, participatory community development techniques, especially in the relatively short time provided for initial training (fifteen and ten days, respectively, for trainers and facilitators[7]).

Monitoring and evaluation are participative activities. Facilitators help participants fill in a monitoring sheet every three months. The facilitator then uses these forms to complete quarterly summary reports which are sent to the REFLECT trainers/coordinators of the project. The trainer/coordinator then reports on the collected summaries from the fifteen circles (or however many the organization is overseeing) and sends the report on the Actionaid RCU Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator in Dhaka. Standard forms for each of these reports are used, and we were able to view some of them during our visits. Thus, the progress of circles and individuals is meant to be monitored in an ongoing manner.

---

[7] Holman relates (Herbert and Holman 1998:49) that in the Anufo REFLECT project in Ghana, the facilitators' training workshop was only five days, due to financial constraints. The organizing team for the Anufo project felt that the precedent of a two-week training workshop could not be sustained in the future due to lack of finances. Thus, as in many other community development programs with a strong ideological base, expedience at the implementation level compromises the principles of the approach. The implementers say, in effect, "We need trained facilitators (or teachers, or trainers, etc.) to make this approach work, so we'll just call them trained!" Certainly, the trainers do the best job they can in the time allotted, but the trainees end up in facilitating situations for which they have not been prepared, which they have not witnessed others deal with, having only the intuition and previous training (of whatever kind) to fall back on. This is not a criticism of the REFLECT approach alone. Rather it is a cautionary tale for all rural education and community development innovators.

3.3.4 Post-Literacy and continuing education. According to its own promotional literature, "post-literacy" and "continuing education" constitute processes that "are built-in within the REFLECT approach" (Actionaid, p. 3). This revised use of terminology is bound to cause confusion in education circles, where the terms refer to activities that, by definition, occur after initial (i.e., basic, functional) literacy instruction has been completed.

We suspect that this recasting of the terms derives from whole language approaches to literacy acquisition. Like REFLECT, these approaches reject a primer and/or phonics based program of instruction. Instead, from the first day they favor the use of the kind of whole texts and "real-world" materials that traditional programs do not introduce until the end of the "code-breaking" process. The REFLECT approach is based on the assumption that the use of participatory techniques will create within the community of participants and in the individual participant the motivation and ability to continue using the skills they have learned during the limited time of the actual learning cycle. From what we gathered, new projects supported by REFLECT Bangladesh go in one-year phases: three months for preliminary field research followed by nine months of meeting together to learn. The number of phases (moving from beginning to more advanced learning) that constitute a complete REFLECT program was not stated in the literature we were given. Apparently, the "normal" REFLECT program is one or two years after which participants enter into one of the larger NGO networks of community action groups, using their newly honed literacy skills to continue addressing community issues, devising group action plans, and evaluating the results of their actions. Thus, the "built-in post-literacy" cannot be legitimately presupposed until some kind of follow-up study of REFLECT "graduates" can be conducted to assess the degree to which their uses of literacy have continued.

With that proviso, the following are what REFLECT organizers in Bangladesh consider the "built-in post-literacy and continuing education" elements of the approach.

1. Actionaid provides training for partner organizations (i.e., other NGOs) to:

- ensure the continued production of participant-generated materials,
- arrange exposure visits to other organizations,
- display newspaper items in local areas,
- publish neoliterate magazines,
- collect real-world materials from the community,
- collect post-literacy materials from other organizations, and
- produce such things as story books, wordbooks, and picture cards.

The partner NGO in the area we visited—the Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS)—publishes a monthly literacy "magazine" with articles of interest for local readers, along with informational and awareness posters and comic-type awareness books. That was the only literature of the type mentioned above that we observed during our visit.

2. Using the above activities and materials, the partner organizations impart training in such areas as democracy awareness, peace and human rights education, environment management, and women empowerment education.

   We were not able to observe any of the activities mentioned above.[8]

3. Partner organizations also incorporate REFLECT graduates into the literate environments of *Path Anushilon Chakkra* (reading circle), and *Lokokendra* (people's center).

   The former is "a kind of reading center that helps develop readership on the one hand and provide[s] literacy materials using local resources on the other" (Actionaid, p. 3). The latter is "the institutional base for post-REFLECT and continuing education towards sustainable development" (p. 3). These are, of course, problematic with respect to the notion of "built-in post-literacy." If the partner organizations, for whatever reasons, do not include REFLECT graduates in their programs or if the programs cease for some reason, the "built-in" post-literacy ceases. In effect, the REFLECT approach has the same problem as more traditional programs: how do you insure sustained literacy by participants once the program is finished?

4. A "linkage program" establishes a relationship between REFLECT graduates and other "mainstream development projects for achieving livelihood for a better future" (p. 3). The intent seems to be that the REFLECT approach not become a dead-end program. An effort is made to link participants with existing, ongoing programs of community development and lifelong education with an emphasis on "sustainability and livelihood, the former referring to a balance among economic efficiency, ecological integrity, and human well-being" (p. 3),

---

[8] A point in passing regarding Actionaid's linking with partner organizations: the RDRS director in Rangpur characterized the development of a network or federation of NGOs as necessary because "social change requires a huge voice". This insight also supports observations we have made (Malone 1997) with respect to Papua New Guinea, namely, that NGOs are often in a kind of complementary distribution with some strong in one area and others strong in other areas. However, the very large number of NGOs in Bangladesh—we heard the number 600 mentioned several times—has resulted in very serious competition for funds, recognition, and prestige which breeds unnecessary duplication of efforts. To their credit, Actionaid seems sincerely committed to cooperative efforts in the country and to introducing REFLECT programs only into existing community groups.

and the latter referring to "activities and entitlements by which people make a living" (p. 3). Rather than a vaguely defined and arbitrary level of literacy, the REFLECT approach aims at "capacity building" in the individual and group. As a result, the technical and sociolinguistic aspects of literacy acquisition may be considered less important.

4. Advantages and disadvantages

Both Seyer (1997) and Holman (Herbert and Holman 1998) present the reader with sets of strengths and weaknesses of the REFLECT method. We will repeat them here in a consolidated form, with our own comments that are a result of our Bangladesh field visits and interactions with Actionaid staff and conference participants at the REFLECT conference in India.

4.1 Advantages

- **The motivation of the group of learners is strong and continuous throughout the program** (Seyer 1997:37). Seyer attributes this motivation to the use of themes generated by the participants themselves, and Holman agrees that the REFLECT program she observed in Ghana "focuses on topics which are of particular relevance and interest to the learners" (Herbert and Holman 1998:51). Our brief visits to nine circles in Bangladesh confirmed for us the usefulness and genuine interest generated by the use of PRA-type graphics and their ability to uncover issues that are relevant and meaningful to participants. The facilitators, trainers, and NGO organizers all concurred that attendance at the REFLECT circles is very high. We asked the facilitator of the circle that demonstrated the highest literacy levels in its three-month running period how often the group met. Her response was, "Two hours a day, six days a week."
- **Community ownership and involvement is inherent in the program.** We agree with Seyer that since the PRA techniques engage the participants actively in articulating their own local reality, "it is not necessary to 'sell' the materials or classes to the community; the community owns this process from the beginning" (p. 37). In all nine of the circles we visited in Bangladesh the same topics were used and the same format was noted in the maps, charts, and matrices—the implication being that the facilitators were leading circle participants into discussions of topics the facilitators had learned in their own training. Even so, the sense of group participation and ownership of the discussions did not appear to be diminished. Participants readily explained to us each of the maps, matrices, charts, or calendars, not only describing the contents, but also explaining the

only describing the contents, but also explaining the purpose and use of the graphic in question.

- **The REFLECT approach builds on local knowledge.** We also agree with Seyer and Holman in affirming the success of the REFLECT approach in this vital area. If local knowledge is **not** valued—and using an instructional method that is at odds, if not contrary, to traditional learning styles does **not** value local knowledge—then the new knowledge that is imparted in the literacy materials has little chance of incorporation into the thoughts and values of the learners. However, it should be noted that the types of PRA techniques used in the circles we visited lent themselves more to identification of needs and problems than to a more holistic focus on the knowledge and history of the community—whether written or oral—which also includes triumphs and successes, solutions and reconciliations, and a host of other positive experiences through which the community has gained knowledge. To focus only on problems and victimization is to distort, not shape, the local reality. And to work primarily toward social change predisposes the community workers to ignore the aspects of local social and cultural order that the community may want to promote and maintain.
- **It links literacy directly with learner perceived needs and development.** Because the REFLECT approach is not based on predetermined, ready-made materials, the actual concerns and issues closest to the participants have the opportunity to be voiced and articulated. Primer-based materials bear a heavy burden of generating interest in learners on the basis of keywords and related stories that rarely coincide with the learners' interests and concerns at the time of the lesson. The REFLECT approach has the capacity to focus on the immediate concerns and interests of the participants and translate them into graphics and writing.[9]
- **Numeracy is fully integrated into the REFLECT approach rather than tacked on as an afterthought as it is in so many other literacy programs.** The integrated numeracy that is described in REFLECT materials was not demonstrated during our visits in Bangladesh. The numeracy we observed was more of the classroom type where the facilitator wrote several double-digit addition problems on the

---

[9] Interestingly, the disastrous floods of June-August 1998 did not result in any of the graphics that we observed in our visits, despite the fact that most of the circles were in the stricken areas. (If there were flood-related graphics, they were not shown to us.) However, the topics and issues that were addressed—local credit schemes, income-generating projects, links to resource-generating NGOs—were relevant to felt needs among the participants as a result of the flooding.

chalkboard and had participants come to the board and try to complete them. We were told anecdotes of participants who were able to help out storekeepers with their accounts after attending the REFLECT circles. The graphics—especially the community maps—have a rich potential for the counting and calculating needed in everyday life. Facilitators, however, may need additional training in order to be alert to the opportunities and to be able to improvise meaningful numeracy activities for the participants.

- **The approach fosters creativity and indigenously-authored literature from the inception of the literacy process.** We agree with both Seyer and Holman that the REFLECT approach should encourage the creation of texts (both graphic and written), if not literature, from the first day onward. In fact, the approach has the potential of fostering a self-concept among participants of being creators of texts, of being writers [see Recommendation 3 below].
- **The REFLECT approach can be adapted to a wide variety of contexts.** Although the nine circles we visited in Bangladesh appeared to share many common traits, even then the adaptability of the approach was evident. The approach was used by both men's and women's groups, were facilitated by young women and a young man, as well as older women, were attended by a wide age-range of participants, indoors as well as outdoors. Pilot projects in El Salvador, Uganda, and Bangladesh, reported in Archer and Cottingham (1996a), provided varied contexts for the approach and results reported from those efforts are quite positive. As for adaptability, we did not witness anything in the nine circles we visited that would cause us to question it.
- **In many contexts, the REFLECT approach has been relatively low cost as compared with other approaches.** Seyer qualifies this statement by applying it to the development of "initial" literacy materials. The use of locally available, familiar materials to create graphics that in turn generate texts for initial literacy acquisition is certainly an inexpensive approach. The observable costs in the REFLECT circles we visited in Bangladesh were for the large sheets of brown paper for the maps, charts, and diagrams, the felt-tipped markers, exercise books for the participants, pencils, and pens. There remains, however, an important unanswered question. Can these inexpensive, participant-generated materials help the participants expand and sustain their newly acquired literacy skills and abilities? If not, what additional materials—books, pamphlets, newspapers, posters, comic books, etc.—will be needed and how much will they cost?
- **The approach has the potential to lead to positive community-initiated change** (Herbert and Holman 1998:52). Although Holman

does not elaborate on this point, we feel it is one of the strongest points justifying efforts to use and adapt the REFLECT approach in other contexts. Our visits in Bangladesh were much too short to assess whether "positive community-initiated change" had occurred, but we did observe many instances of positive community interactions. For example, as each of the eight women's circles demonstrated their materials and modus operandi for us, they sat in their typical circle discussing important community issues, problems, and solutions. Invariably, a crowd would gather around the twenty-five participants, made up of children of all ages, men and women, married and unmarried. It seems inevitable that the young girls, listening and watching their mothers and aunts construct graphics and charts and discuss possible actions for improving the community, would be expanding their own sense of purpose and potential. Likewise, in the one men's circle we visited, the facilitator indicated that a teen-aged participant, sitting beside his father, had quit the formal education class he was enrolled in to join the REFLECT circle "because the activities were more relevant and interesting than the school's."

4.2 Disadvantages

- **The acquisition of literacy skills is not sequential** (Seyer 1997:38). Seyer considers it to be a disadvantage that REFLECT literacy instruction lacks a smooth movement "from beginning literacy with a few vocabulary items to larger chunks of language." This criticism presupposes an understanding of literacy as a linear, sequential process, the same understanding that undergirds primer-based literacy methods. Thus, it would be unfair to accuse the promoters of REFLECT of excluding what they have announced from the beginning that they are rejecting, namely a primer-based approach. On the other hand, the REFLECT facilitators we observed in Bangladesh were doing something very like an alphabet or syllable approach to direct instruction. In several demonstrations, the facilitator wrote the word generated from the discussion on the chalkboard, then broke it down into its component parts, giving the name (not the sound) for each symbol. This was typical. In short, the REFLECT facilitators used the same part-to-whole method that primer approaches use, without the advantage of their carefully constructed progression from most productive to least productive sounds/symbols.

We feel that the theoretically haphazard way that REFLECT developers have incorporated literacy acquisition into the approach is a definite shortcoming, but we do not feel that the addition of a traditional primer is the antidote. In a participatory community development approach such as REFLECT, the logical choice of instructional methodology is one in which the learners participate fully, from the beginning, in meaningful interaction with culturally relevant texts.[10] In the SIL context, three variations on this kind of approach are: (1) language experience (more a technique than a method), (2) interactive whole language (a variation/combination of whole-to-part and part-to-whole approaches with the former dominating), and (3) the Multi-Strategy Method (Stringer and Faraclas 1987) (a combination of whole-to-part and part-to-whole divided equally into two halves). [We present suggestions for a possible adaptation of these models for REFLECT under Recommendation 1 below.]

- **Lack of post-literacy materials leading learners into a wider literate environment.** This is, quite frankly, a deficiency hardly unique to the REFLECT approach. In our opinion, the single most important factor in sustaining literacy is the availability of a large quantity of varied (in topic and level of difficulty), culturally relevant, and affordable literature in the readers' mother tongue. As Seyer points out, the same needs apply to the language-of-wider-communication that is the target of literacy programs with a transitional component.
- **Need for highly motivated, skilled facilitators.** Seyer and Holman both refer to this as a weakness in the REFLECT approaches they have studied. We agree and consider this a critical issue for REFLECT organizers. Freire's original literacy approach demanded just such a "highly motivated, highly skilled facilitator" and in many situations the approach failed precisely because those kind of facilitators are hard to find and hard to train. Actionaid promotes the REFLECT approach (i.e., Freire regenerated) as having overcome that major hurdle through the use of "empowering community techniques" (i.e., PRA techniques, especially the use of graphics in initial literacy acquisition). Has REFLECT actually solved the Freirean facilitator dilemma or is it a methodological mirage? Our unoriginal reply to that is: yes and no.

  Yes, the PRA techniques used by REFLECT facilitators with a minimum of training effectively engage participants in discussion and dialogue of relevant and socially significant issues. We observed some of this ourselves and the reports of other participants' visits to REFLECT circles in India, Nepal, and other parts of Bangladesh all confirm that this aspect of the approach is highly successful.

---

[10] At the REFLECT Global Conference in Puri, India, participants made a strong point of this in their recommendations to Actionaid. The developers and staff of REFLECT for Actionaid seem clearly aware of the problems of their literacy method (or lack of one) and are seeking advice from those with an interest in the success of the approach and expertise and experience in language education. In addition, participants made a strong plea for more literature and more training of trainers and facilitators.

No, REFLECT has not solved the training dilemma completely because their facilitators seem to be poorly equipped to implement an unstructured instructional method without a clear understanding of the theory and process of literacy acquisition, especially among adult learners. SIL experience in participatory literacy approaches, however, supports the idea that trainers and facilitators, without high levels of education (i.e., not beyond Grade 10 or Form 4) can be equipped to use these techniques effectively.

The training program that is needed would retain the emphases on participation that is already a part of the REFLECT approach as well as the clearly successful use of PRA techniques. It would add a third emphasis, i.e., facilitators would gain a basic understanding of the principles and processes of learning that would guide them in fostering literacy acquisition.

- **The implications of using the approach with unwritten languages have not been well considered.** Seyer makes a strong point that REFLECT promoters have apparently not dealt seriously with the linguistic complexities of many indigenous languages. This, we suspect, is true. In Bangladesh, we asked the RCU staff what they do in areas where the people do not speak Bengali. Their response was that everyone speaks Bengali (and it was true in the circles we visited). However, two of the groups that visited REFLECT circles in the south and east of Bangladesh reported that the people used their own mother tongue in normal community interactions and did **not** understand Bengali well. These groups recommended that Actionaid investigate using the mother tongue for the PRA graphics. Actionaid staff we spoke with informally in India also indicated their concern with this issue, although as Seyer suggests (1997:39), they do suspect that SIL members purposely keep linguistics as mystifying as possible for the "uninitiated." That is unfortunate, especially if the emphasis on linguistic concerns—orthography issues such as symbol choice, suprasegmental representations, phonemic versus morphophonemic spellings, for example—hinders the local community's participation in the whole process of developing a writing system that, in the long run, will be theirs to use and develop. SIL linguists can support the process of developing "user friendly" orthographies by providing linguistically and sociolinguistically viable options for REFLECT and similar projects. Such a role requires the "expert" to relinquish "control" over the decision-making process but in the end fosters community ownership of the orthography.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented with the hope that SIL teams in a variety of sociolinguistic and cultural settings will experiment with and adapt the REFLECT approach, especially if they are involved in community development projects.

1. That SIL members with training, experience, and expertise (whatever that means!) in literacy acquisition work on adapting interactive whole language, Multi-Strategy Method, or language experience methods into the REFLECT approach.[11]

   Several features will need to be included:

   - a process for developing participant-generated texts beyond the graphics stage;
   - a process of developing mother-tongue writers to produce interesting and culturally relevant literature in the language;
   - a process by which awareness and other community development materials can be made available to support the literacy acquisition process; and
   - a process by which locally-authored materials can be published, printed, and distributed within the language community at a reasonable cost.

2. That the training component for the REFLECT approach be adapted so that, to the extent possible given local constraints, it includes a longer training component for both the trainers and the facilitators. Again, several factors need to be included.

   - The training needs to equip facilitators with a basic understanding of the theories and principles that underlie the method that is chosen.
   - It needs to provide facilitators with guidelines for introducing the necessary elements of the orthography in a (relatively) structured way, i.e., more than a random selection of letters or symbols and less than the strictly controlled introduction of phonemes through primer-based instruction.

---

[11] Holman (1998:49) reiterates in her account of the Anufo case study that Gudschinsky primers have functioned effectively in many African contexts, and REFLECT facilitators there are familiar with the method. We do not suggest that what is not broken be fixed. We do, however, suggest that the evaluators of the pilot programs be alert for possible confusion when the participatory focus of the PRA techniques and the emphasis on the REFLECT circle as a community of learners try to interface with the inherently teacher-centered approach used in the Gudschinsky method.

3. That research be conducted to determine the degree to which the emphasis on the creation of graphics and text early in the literacy acquisition process correlates with participants' increased ability to read with understanding and fluency.
4. That SIL members continue to dialogue with Actionaid personnel in the use and adaptation of the REFLECT approach.

6. Conclusion

Our personal view of the REFLECT approach[12]—warts and all, as they say—has resulted in our increased interest in this innovation and optimism about its potential for use in ethnolinguistic minority communities served by SIL personnel and others. Major problems such as facilitator training, literature production, and literacy instructional methodology all need to be addressed. Although not a panacea for every community development or literacy project, the REFLECT approach nevertheless warrants trial and adaptation wherever community participation is integral to the success of the development effort, which is, of course, everywhere.

References

Actionaid-Bangladesh, RCU. n.d. REFLECT in Bangladesh: A radical approach to literacy and social change. ms.

Archer, David and Sarah Cottingham. 1996a. Action research report on REFLECT: The experiences of three REFLECT projects in Uganda, Bangladesh, El Salvador. Serial No. 17. London: Overseas Development Administration.

———. 1996b. REFLECT Mother manual: Regenerated Freirean literacy through empowering community techniques. London: Actionaid.

Herbert, Pat and Mary Holman. 1998. The pros and cons of the REFLECT method. Notes on Literacy 24.1:42–53.

Malone, Susan. 1997. Cooperation, conflict, and complementarity: A study of relationships among organizations involved in mother tongue literacy and preprimary education in Papua New Guinea. Ph.D. dissertation. Indiana University, Bloomington.

Seyer, Linda. 1997. The REFLECT approach used in an SIL setting. Notes on Literacy 23.2:28–43.

Stringer, Mary and Nicholas Faraclas. 1987. Working together for literacy. Wewak, PNG: Christian Books Melanesia.

---

[12] Our view is more than a perusal of the *REFLECT Mother Manual* (1996b) and the *Action Report on REFLECT* (1996).

Notes on Literacy 25.3&4:31–44.

Literacy Programs: Getting the Ideology Right

Keith Berry

Keith Berry and his wife, Christine, have been working among the Abun people (Bird's Head, Irian Jaya, Indonesia) with SIL since 1986. They have been working on translation as well as literacy and primary health programs.

Introduction

"The objective of an ideological subsystem is to give a 'soul' to the body of the literacy programme. [It provides] a set of values to use in making choices" (Bhola 1994:158).

Over the years many groups, both government and nongovernment organizations have endeavored to organize and implement literacy programs among the minority peoples of the world. Often these programs have been ineffective. One of the main reasons is that insufficient consideration has been given to the local culture or worldview. Generally when outsiders or Western-educated insiders plan programs, they do so based upon their own worldview. One of the biggest problems is that the values, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes of outsiders somehow infiltrate the program.

Initially, practitioners took the Western "essay-text" model of literacy and tried to implement that in minority cultures. Street (1995) has labeled this type of approach as the "autonomous" model of literacy. This single form of literacy, which ignores different cultural contexts, does not always fit the recipients' culture. One problem with this model is that it assumes a narrow, culturally-specific, Western view of what literacy is. Instead, Street proposes what he calls an IDEOLOGICAL MODEL and that there are many literacies, not one. Literacy differs according to the cultural context. The ideological model instead pays explicit attention to the local forms of literacy and culture. The ideology that literacy programs are based upon needs to be thought through clearly in order to make sure that a program is relevant and will be in accord with the recipients' worldview.

Promoters of literacy have focused on various reasons for doing literacy. For example, UNESCO has placed considerable emphasis on functional literacy, which came to mean that the goal of literacy was to enable the recipients to function in an economic sense. Others promoted critical literacy with the aim of helping the recipients to develop their cognitive processes to "read the world," to understand the issues and be empowered to implement change, and to be released from oppression. Other types of literacy promoted have been labeled as cultural literacy (to help release local people from superstition, apathy, and fatalism), survival literacy (to help preserve a minority culture from dominant cultures), political literacy (to promote national unity and democracy), women's literacy (to promote equality of gender, to promote development, given that women's role in that is crucial in many cases), and spiritual literacy (to help convert and nurture faith in God).

Although these may not have been importing the Western essay-text model of literacy, most are still based upon Western ideologies, such as materialism, democracy, equality of gender, and the Western ideas of what is "educated". The problem with this is that many minority groups do not embrace these values in the same way they are embraced in the West, and that is one significant reason why these programs are often not effective.

The contention of this article is that in order to plan, promote, and implement literacy programs that will be effective in minority groups, practitioners need to leave aside their own values, ideas, and beliefs and endeavor to come to a deep understanding of the recipients' worldview. A literacy program based upon the recipients' worldview is much more likely to be effective. If, for example, their culture does not embrace the idea of women being literate, then a program aimed at this will not be effective, at least not until the people there change their values in that area. The desirability and the methods of changing minority peoples' values are issues outside the scope of this article.

One area that is often overlooked by Western practitioners is that of spiritual literacy. It is my observation that most Westerners see that as a narrow purpose for literacy, because spirituality does not figure highly in their values. In contrast, it appears to this author, based upon personal knowledge of several minority groups in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, that many minority groups of the world place a high value on spiritual awareness. Practitioners who minimize the importance of this area because of their own ideologies will tend to organize literacy programs that will not produce the hoped for results.

Personal perspectives

The ideology underpinning a literacy program is very important. This author must confess that he did not consciously think through this before beginning a literacy program among the Abun people in Irian Jaya during

1996–97. Having subsequently sorted through this issue, it seemed useful to share some perspectives.

In community development, local involvement is encouraged as a must for all types of programs, and there is a wealth of evidence, as well as just plain common sense, that supports this approach. Even so, a field workers' own way of thinking often dominates, and programs frequently do not produce the hoped for results. Ethnocentricity is like a vicious disease that some individuals get tangled up with as they try to work crossculturally. That is no exception when it comes to literacy programs; therefore, literacy workers need to thoroughly think through upon what ideology any program is based.

Each program has its own set of values, beliefs, and attitudes. As Baynham (1995:1) points out, "Literacy is ideological: like all uses of language it is not neutral, but shapes and is shaped by deeply held ideological positions which can be either implicit or explicit." But what are the ideological positions that shape literacy; what are the underlying values upon which literacy programs are based?

In this discussion, ideology can be defined as Baynham (1995:4) does, that is, "a collection of ideas, beliefs and attitudes which, taken together make up a world view...." It is this worldview that shapes the definition of literacy adopted in each program.

In this article several aspects in relation to ideology are considered. Firstly, the ideological positions held by proponents of adult literacy are discussed. This can best be understood by analysis of what underlies the definitions given for literacy in each case. Then following that is a discussion about what ideological position may be considered most desirable for literacy in rural, developing world, minority people groups. The ideology, which was the basis of the Abun literacy program is discussed in relation to commonly held positions.

Ideological positions

Some literacy programs do not appear to have any particular ideology and may be said to follow an AUTONOMOUS model, as described by Street (1995 and elsewhere). Such an approach deals primarily with the teaching and learning of encoding and decoding skills in discrete, measurable competencies independently of social contexts. This approach has tended to be the default in SIL programs. No doubt many people simply believe in an inherent value in learning how to read and write. They themselves learned and found it useful for a multitude of reasons and thereby presume that others, regardless of context, would likewise find it helpful, without necessarily pinpointing any particular objective.

However, it is generally accepted that literacy cannot be an end in itself. Proponents of the autonomous model assert that by learning how to read and write, the new literate's cognitive processes will be improved (Goody and Watt 1968). Bhola (1994:160) concurs, "Whatever the objective, or whatever the setting in which it is taught, literacy adds potential to human capacities." Others disagree, for example, Scribner and Cole (1981) found that among the Vai there was little or no superiority of literates over non-literates in tests of memory, conceptual agility, and deductive reasoning. From this author's own subjective assessment of Abun people, he tends to concur with Scribner and Cole. The cognitive processes of those who are not literate appear to be similar to those who are. There is one difference that was noticed among the Abun people, and that is that when individuals become literate there is an accompanying improvement in self-esteem. As a result there is a greater outward expression of their capacities, thus it may well appear as though literacy improves cognitive processes. This opinion is based on many years of living with and observing those who have become literate.

For those who subscribe to the autonomous model, their objective is to help the general development of the recipients. Their ideology has a rather broad spectrum and to a large extent allows the recipients to adapt their newfound literateness to suit their own ideology. The main problem here is that a broad ideology like this may not convert to a strong mobilizing effect that will impel illiterates to action (UNESCO 1980:27). Other ideologies have more specific aims, and they will now be considered.

Ideologies are not always clearly stated and need to be deduced from the definition of literacy proposed by the organizers of a program. Over the years there has been a development of literacy definitions by UNESCO and others. Most notable are the concepts of functional literacy and critical literacy. Initially the idea of functional literacy was to enable the recipients to function in their own cultural context, but since the UNESCO conference in Tehran in 1965, there has been a shift in thinking whereby functional literacy has been more tied to economic functions (Bhola 1994:32). UNESCO (1980:23) states that "economic motivations have a leading part to play in the definition of objectives among both promoters and learners." Meisenhelder (1992:4) also notes in regard to functional literacy that "[w]hile functionality—the idea that literacy should not be an end in itself—is still at the core of literacy theorising and practice today, the concept has undergone transformation in part as the result of changing notions about what constitutes development." Functional literacy, therefore, is very much tied up with economic development.

On the other hand, Freire (1982, 1985), Giroux (1989), and McLaren (1989) champion literacy as critical praxis to be used to critique and transform the literate's world, that is, critical literacy which helps to liberate, encourage, and to some extent empower new literates to "read the world" around them and change it in accordance with their worldview. It seeks to organize people for political action for transforming the world around them (Bhola 1994:33). Similarly, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, it is acknowledged that first and foremost literacy entails restoring people's dignity and changing the quality of society (UNESCO 1980:20).

In contrast to the Freire view, other politically orientated ideologies upon which literacy campaigns are based enable the government to be the prime mover by using literacy as a tool to assist in working towards national unity, provision of equal opportunity, and the democratization of the nation, such as in Afghanistan, Peru, India, and the UK (UNESCO 1980:21). In this case the push for political change comes more from the government rather than, as Freire's approach suggests, from the new literate.

By way of comparison, according to Bhola, critical literacy has not yet won over functional literacy; the latter is appearing and reappearing with emphasis on economic functionality in many forms: workplace literacy, task-specific literacy, and intergenerational literacy or family literacy (1994:33). Even though that is the case, now both functional literacy and critical literacy have been in a sense combined into what Bhola (1994:37) posits as the current concept of functional literacy, that is, one that encompasses three elements: literacy, functionality, and awareness:

- Literacy focuses on the skills of reading and writing....
- Functionality deals with economic skills.
- Awareness creates awareness among learners in regard to their social, cultural, and political life.

This functional literacy triangle, as Bhola calls it, includes education to provide the basic level of skills and content needed in the targeted society. Thus, there can be no universal or standard syllabuses.

But what ideological positions are these two types of literacy, or the mix suggested by Bhola, based upon? What are their underlying philosophies? Functional literacy, as it is now defined with its strong economic component and with its aims of development of the individual and their community, has as its basis the Western worldview that economic development is important and highly desirable. This is based on a Western materialistic worldview.

In the same way, critical literacy is also based on another Western worldview, as noted by Waters (1997:40). "[C]ritical theorists reassert the importance of rational inquiry which has been the cornerstone of western thinking for several hundred years." While people groups in rural, developing world settings to some extent subscribe to these Western values of materialism and rational inquiry, are such values as central to their worldview as many Westerners unquestionably assume? This is doubtful.

> Many critical literacy proponents vigorously promote 'democracy', but this may, or may not, be the preferred form of social organisation for many groups. Alternatively, some critical literacy theorists have an idealistic view of indigenous cultures; in that they view 'oppression' as coming from outside a culture and ignore aspects within it, or within the individual, that oppress. Also some working within the critical literacy perspectives view indigenous cultures as sacrosanct, believing that contact and/or colonisation have brought changes which have mainly been negative. However the views of those within the indigenous community may differ on this point[1] (Waters 1997:44).

One may also set up a literacy campaign with the aim of helping minority people groups survive from the encroaching "outside" world. To some extent critical literacy can play a part in the struggles of indigenous peoples to maintain their languages and cultures when facing the onslaught of more dominant discourses (Faraclas 1993, Freire 1985). However, critical literacy may not achieve this aim in a way that suits the culture or national government. Certainly a critical literacy program, of the type suggested by Freire, conducted among minority groups in some countries would not be condoned by the central government.

Other reasons for conducting literacy programs which some label as narrow are, for example, to professionalize labor or to convert people to particular religious beliefs (Bhola 1994:159). But even at the base of these "reasons" are deeper ideologies. For professionalization of labor, presumably as a result the business would hope to ultimately gain greater profits through greater productivity, that is, this is a manifestation of the same materialistic worldview that drives functional literacy.

In regard to the use of literacy to convert people to particular religious beliefs, if this was indeed genuine (not a scam to seek material benefits for the promoter), then one possible ideological basis could be one of a conviction that a spiritual orientation change would benefit the recipients' quality of life both on the earth and eternally. UNESCO acknowledges that motivations for literacy are frequently bound up with religion, noting that historically speaking a concern with being able to read sacred writings has been one of the basic factors involved in giving impetus to the literacy movement in a large number of countries (1980:26). This could be called spiritual literacy.

---

[1] For example, several of my Papua New Guinean friends and colleagues refer to the many good things that have resulted from mission contact, citing such things as the introduction of health and education services and the cessation of intertribal conflict and cannibalism.

A further objective is contained within what is known as cultural literacy, which aims at creating a man who understands his physical environment correctly and is willing to conquer and develop it. In other words, cultural literacy is used as a tool to enable self-emancipation from superstition, apathy, and fatalism. It helps correct "wrong thinking" that is bound up in the culture of people groups (UNESCO 1980:25). But what is "wrong thinking"? What is "wrong" is based upon a belief that the dominant Western-educated, cultural worldview is correct.

There are those, such as Topping (1992), who disagree with ideologies that promote "cultural literacy" claiming that indigenous cultural erosion is undesirable. He documents cultural erosion in the Pacific Islands as a result of literacy. He also acknowledges that literacy is a powerful tool for change and is particularly concerned that there needs to be policies in place to make sure that the traditional culture of the participants is not eroded as a result. There is, he says, "increasing isolation and alienation from traditional sources and areas of knowledge as literacy takes place. These various types of knowledge, all of which depend on memory and oral transmission, are no match for that transmitted by the printed word, such is the power of literacy" (p. 28).

The expression "cultural erosion" has negative connotations. People like Topping somehow have a standard for traditional oral societies that any change in their culture is not good. Whereas, our own culture is changing rapidly, and there is little negative comment about that. The desire for oral societies' cultures to be maintained like a piece in a museum is unrealistic, and indeed, those individuals who feel that way would not want their own cultures to remain static. Cultures are dynamic and ever changing. People in oral societies themselves determine in what ways they want to change their culture. Some new things they will integrate into their culture and others they will reject. No outsider has the right to complain that another ethnic group's culture has been eroded. It is that group's choice to change. It always has been and it always will be.

Let me digress and explain why policies should not be in place to prevent recipients' cultures from being eroded. Why is it felt that erosion is negative? Some aspects of cultural "erosion", at least in part due to literacy that this author has encountered among the Abun people, have been very positive. For example, when twins were born, the Abun people used to kill one of the twins. In 1988 I saw this happen in the village where I live with my wife and family. Also, dependence on the shaman in Abun culture has been diminishing, however, the infant mortality rate has been improving. In a survey of 137 Abun-speaking families in 1997, this author discovered that during that last ten years on average 60 percent of shaman children died, whereas only 40 percent of non-shaman children died. This seems to put into question the shaman's rituals and teachings. Who would take his sick child to a doctor who could not adequately treat his own children? The head shaman in our village has had twelve children, but only one of them is still alive today. Certainly when one hears a shaman teaching such as, "do not give a child with diarrhea any water," one begins to understand why mortality of shaman's children is significantly higher. These aspects of culture have been "eroded" recently by increased literacy among the Abun people. Who would say that is a negative thing? The Abun people themselves are very pleased with this change in their culture.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to try to engineer cultural change in ways the people do not want. An attempt to reintroduce Abun traditional song types into popular usage again was well nigh impossible. The Abun figured that it was making a backward step to do such a thing, so efforts to "restore" culture were not received. In the final analysis, the people themselves make decisions as to what changes they make to their culture, so how then can any outsider criticize the use of literacy saying it erodes culture. It helps to reshape culture in accordance with the people's own desires. People are not passive objects who are simply manipulated by outsiders with literacy (Kulick and Stroud 1993:31). Literacy is shaped by culture as much as literacy shapes culture. Many traditional oral societies around the world are just waiting for the positive changes that can result through being literate.

Both the ideology that promotes cultural literacy, that the Western, cultural worldview is best, and that which opposes it, the ideology of the sacrosanct nature of indigenous cultures, are not necessarily viewpoints subscribed to by minority people groups like the Abun people.

Another issue in the ideological debate is the desire to impact and release women from illiteracy. Bhola (1994) subscribes to the ideology of universal literacy. He says, "We are particularly in favour of gender equality in literacy promotion. Gender should not open only some doors and close all others" (p. 161). The basis of this ideology, however, comes back to the Western cultural worldview, and who says that is the best one? Equality of gender, and even emphasis of development of women (in an effort to redress a lack), has become a popular feature of development programs over the last few decades. It has been generally accepted among community development workers as axiomatic to any positive development.[2] The Western development of the idea of equality of genders, however, sometimes goes too far. Bhola's comment that gender should not only open some doors and close all others reflects an attitude that ignores practical realities. Gender does shut some doors, and that is reality. Males are not made to bear children! There is equality in the sense of status, but it must be acknowledged that roles are different. In some cultures women may not want to, or be permitted by their spouse or parents to, take part in literacy programs. In such cases it may be seen as an inappropriate role for women to be literate because of what literacy is perceived to do for them. Is their cultural view "wrong" just because it is unacceptable to the current position in Western culture? Would those who oppose cultural erosion be happy to support any culture that prevented women from becoming literate? It is a strange inconsistency that those people who tend to hold traditional culture as sacrosanct are also most vigorous in promoting equal roles for both genders. Should a literacy program be focused specifically on women? If the local culture does not embrace it, then this ideology will result in an ineffective program.

---

[2] In this author's experience this is true; women are generally more reliable than men in running projects, so there is good reason for this push. For example, some of the best tutors in the Abun literacy program were women.

In summary, there are several types of ideological positions upon which literacy work is based. These include the following:

- materialistic worldview with its economic motivations which leads to **functional literacy**,
- rational thinking, democracy, a sacrosanct view of indigenous cultures and political motivations which lead to **critical literacy**,
- national unity, equal opportunity, and political motivations which lead to **political literacy**,
- spiritually orientated worldview and religious motivations which lead to **spiritual literacy**,
- dominant Western-educated culture worldview and cultural motivations which lead to **cultural literacy**, and
- Western cultural view of equality of gender and cultural motivations which lead to **women's literacy**.

These positions overlap with each other to some extent, and any program may consist of several of these mixed together or not even have a defined ideology. According to Bhola (1994), in the final analysis that does not really matter. "Indeed it is not absolutely necessary to have a clear ideology to support literacy or even to have only one ideological justification for literacy promotion. All that matters is that literacy work be permitted and promoted. Whatever the objective of those promoting literacy, illiterates become literate. Literacy wins. Ultimately new literates win" (p. 161).

The above discussion considers the ideology from the point of view of the promoters, but the learners may well have different objectives for wanting to take part in a literacy program, Therefore, Bhola comments that it does not really matter. UNESCO also observes, "The intentions of the government or non-government agencies engaged in this work do not necessarily coincide with those of the public involved" (p. 18). Furthermore, the ideologies of others involved in the program such as the teachers or supervisors may also differ from the promoters. Bhola notes, "The ideological subsystem is something of which literacy workers are often unaware. Teachers and others at the grassroots can make ideology come to life...or they can subvert the programme's ideology" (p. 158). Even so, the policies, program, and materials are usually largely determined by the promoters' ideology. But if a literacy program is to be successful what ideological position is best? Does it matter? Should it be contextually determined? How should it be formulated?

What is the right ideology?

It is difficult to say if one particular ideological system is best for diverse groups of rural minority peoples. Instead the appropriate ideology needs to be contextually determined and decidedly not based upon an ethnocentric outsider's ideas. Fordham, Holland, and Millican (1995) take the view that the learners themselves, as well as agencies and field workers should have their own view of what should be done and be full participants at all levels of decision making. They say, "If the views of insiders are not taken into account, it is unlikely that the outsider will design a programme that can achieve lasting results" (p. 7). Insiders' views need to be taken into account at the beginning, when the ideological basis is being laid. This must be balanced with the potential input from outsiders, since the insiders' experience is often somewhat limited. For Papua New Guinea, Waters (1997:45) comes to similar conclusions. "It is my contention that ultimately Papua New Guineans should decide which understandings of literacy should be adopted in vernacular literacy programmes within their country. For the context is theirs, they alone are thoroughly immersed in and understand it and are the ones who should control it. However those who decide should do so knowing all available options."

In the Abun context, several Abun coworkers were involved in the initial stages; however the ideology was not consciously set as such. Instead the situation and needs for literacy among the Abun people were assessed and on that basis literacy was promoted. The ideological basis was a mixture of spiritual and social reasons. The economic motivation of functional literacy was definitely not a part of the ideology, nor were the political connotations of critical literacy in focus. One exception here was the aim to enable Abun people to be able to protect themselves from unscrupulous outsiders. For the Abun literacy program, the ideology was in fact strongly connected to the local context and need. There were social needs and spiritual needs, and the main aim of the program was to help fulfil these needs.

Socially, Abun people needed to be able to handle encroaching "civilization" from outside. For example, Waikoi was an elderly Abun lady who was busy preparing the evening meal late one afternoon. She had picked the young pumpkin leaves and washed them. She began by placing a little coconut oil in a large wok. When the oil was very hot she added her leaves. She fried them in the oil and added some water. Then she began looking around for *fetsin* (MSG). She thought she saw her daughter buy some the day before and put it inside the house. She searched around until she found the little packet. Pleased with herself she came out to the kitchen and poured it in. All of a sudden she was aghast with the results. The whole lot started bubbling up. She began swearing at it and cursing the silly thing! It bubbled up so much that the leaves with the bubbles overflowed. She became frantic and threw the whole lot away. Not long after her daughter, Ester, returned from the garden to get an account of the whole experience. Ester explained that the stuff in the little packet was not *fetsin* but rather shampoo. Of course, Waikoi could not read, so it was hard for her to know. Literacy is more and more becoming a need for the Abun people as development reaches into their area. There are many reasons why an Abun person would want to learn to read or at least to prevent a repetition of the above type of occurrence.

The main reason to learn to read for the Abun people is spiritual; in particular, they desire to be able to read sacred writings and songbooks. Literacy is mainly used in Abun villages for this purpose, thus an ideology based on their assessed needs is crucial for a program to have any chance of success. The use of functional or critical literacy-oriented programs which presume materialistic and democratic worldviews, that is, essentially Western worldviews, are not appropriate in contexts like that of the Abun people. Having said that, even with a program focused on the spiritual area, benefits can also flow over to economic, social, cultural, and political areas of life and may be even more effective than any program specifically aimed in these other directions. Why? There is a strong connection with spiritual satisfaction and all other areas of life among rural, developing world people groups.[3] For example, one of our friends, Isak, who already professed himself to be a Christian, became more spiritually satisfied by a better understanding of what it means to be a Christian by reading scripture in Abun. He then decided to plant a peanut garden, sold the peanuts, and earned Rp500.000 (about $350), whereas no one else in the Abun people group had significantly improved their economic status in this way before this time. His endeavors in this area resulted from contentment in his spiritual life. It seems that economic improvement for Isak came as a result of adequate spiritual orientation and security. Without that there is little purpose to do anything except survive. So, although Western writers may label values that seek to fulfil spiritual needs as narrow, rural minority people groups in the developing world have a worldview that places spiritual security much higher than materialism, democracy, or rational inquiry. Literacy programs therefore need to consider these values in order to be effective.

---

[3] This could well be true of many Westerners whether they acknowledge it or not.

Matane (1986) notes that peoples in Papua New Guinea have a distinctive philosophy of education that focuses on integral human development in social, spiritual, physical, economic, and political areas. The ideologies or objectives of literacy promotion are many and varied, but as UNESCO (1980:27) notes, "the position and role of each of these objectives varies considerably from one geographical, political and cultural context to another." This author suggests that among minority people groups the spiritual area is of much higher significance than any Westerner would begin to imagine. In rural developing world contexts, programs that are based on Western ideologies alone and do not take the spiritual factor into account will have limited success.

Some people reject what they refer to as narrow purposes, such as the spiritual factor. Instead they advocate political and economic purposes for literacy, somehow believing that these help improve the individuals' quality of life more so than the spiritual and social purposes for literacy that were the basis for the Abun literacy program. Political reasons or economic reasons are just as narrow, if not more narrow than spiritual and social reasons for literacy in the contexts such as those under discussion. Frequently political and economic improvements have little impact on one's quality of life. In fact, it often leads to the very opposite. This author has seen economic improvement among people in Irian Jaya without adequate spiritual orientation result in greater drunkenness and carousing with consequent fights, misery, and court cases. Why promote economic improvement as a good reason for literacy in the light of that? Western thinking holds that economic improvement is good, but that does not always hold up in developing communities. Some groups have sold land and then squandered the money on drink and adulterous living. In the end they had to spend much time and effort dealing with offended parties in court cases. More income does not necessarily result in that which minority people's want.

In conclusion, ideologies employed in conducting literacy work in developing countries have generally been based upon Western worldviews as to what is of value, such as materialism, rational inquiry, democracy, equality of gender, and the like. Many people groups, and in particular those which are minority groups living in rural areas, often do not embrace these ideas. As a result literacy programs that promote such concepts would not be as effective as they could be. In order to be most effective, an ideology needs to be firmly based upon the values of the recipients of the program. Programs aimed at improving the spiritual awareness of people groups like the Abun people will be based on a more solid ideological foundation desirable to the participants of the program and therefore more likely to be effective.

References

Baynham, Mike. 1995. Literacy practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts. London: Longman.

Bhola, H. S. 1994. A source book for literacy work. Perspective from the grassroots. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers/UNESCO Publishing.

Faraclas, Nicholas. 1993. New developments in literacy in PNG languages. Paper given at the First International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics, Vila 5–9 July 1993.

Fordham, Paul, Deryn Holland, and Juliet Millican. 1995. Adult literacy: A handbook for development workers. Oxford: Oxfam (UK and Ireland) Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Freire, Paulo. 1982. Creating alternative research methods: Learning it do it by doing it. The Action Research Reader, 269–274. 3rd edition. Geelong: Deakin University Press.

———. 1985. The politics of education. Culture, power and liberation. Translated by Donaldo Macedo. Houndsmills: Macmillan Publishers.

Giroux, Henry A. 1989. Schooling for democracy. Critical pedagogy in the modern age. London: Routledge.

Goody, Jack and Ian Watt. 1968. The consequences of literacy. In Jack Goody (ed.), Literacy in traditional societies, 27–68. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kulick, Don and Christopher Stroud. 1993. Conceptions and uses of literacy in a Papua New Guinean village. In Brian V. Street (ed.), Cross-cultural approaches to literacy. Cambridge studies in oral and literate culture, 23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malone, Dennis L. 1994. Dear Nolly. Notes on Literacy 20.2:32–54. Dallas, Tex.: SIL.

Matane, Paulias. 1986. A philosophy of education for Papua New Guinea. A Ministerial Committee Report.

McLaren, Peter. 1989. Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundation of education. Toronto: Irwin Publishing.

Meisenhelder, Susan. 1992. Literacy and national development: The case of Botswana. In Fraida Dubin and Natalie A Kuhlman (eds.), Cross cultural literacy. New Jersey: Regents/Prentice Hall.

Scribner, S and M. Cole. 1981. The psychology of literacy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Street, Brian V. 1995. Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education. New York: Longman.

Topping, Donald M. 1992. Literacy and cultural erosion in the Pacific Islands. In Fraida Dubin and Natalie A Kuhlman (eds.), Cross cultural literacy. New Jersey: Regents/Prentice Hall.

UNESCO. 1980. Literacy 1972–1976. Progress achieved in literacy throughout the world. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Waters, Glenys. 1997. On the brink: A survey and evaluation of vernacular education and language programming at the provincial level within Papua New Guinea. M. Ed. dissertation.

Submitting Articles to *Notes on Literacy*

Please be sure the following instructions are followed when submitting an article for possible publication in *Notes on Literacy*.

1. **Submit articles in electronic format (either MAC or DOS), plus send a hard copy to the editor.** If you choose to send an article via e-mail, be sure it is in DOS format, as the editor's computer will not recognize MAC e-mail. A hard copy is needed, because some items do not translate well between computers, as many different computers and programs are used. Viewing the hard copy shows how the author intended the article to appear. Special characters, especially, can get lost.
2. **Include a brief biographical sketch.** This should include relevant training and degrees earned, dates of service, field(s) of service, and current title (e.g., literacy specialist, consultant, etc.).
3. **Be sure all direct quotes (anything in quotation marks) have the proper citation in the text where they occur.** This includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number(s). Indirect quotes (material paraphrased without quotation marks) need to include the author's last name and year of publication.
4. **Include all pertinent information in bibliography.** This includes author's first and last names, year of publication, title of book or journal, and for journals and anthologies: article name, volume, issue, and page numbers.
5. **Be sure to include your current mailing address, as well as an e-mail address, if available.** Once an article is accepted and published, the author will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which his or her article appears.

NOTES ON
LITERACY

VOLUME 25.1-2 JANUARY 1999

CONTENTS

Articles

Long Words — Ursula Weisemann 1

Introduction to a Bilingual Schooling Typology through Three Examples — Scott McCracken 5

The Challenge of Introducing the First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) into the Philippine Formal Education Program — Catherine Young 25

Review

The Politics of Writing by Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič — reviewed by Linda Seyer 39

FL801490

SIL INTERNATIONAL
7500 WEST CAMP WISDOM ROAD
DALLAS, TEXAS 75236

NOTES ON LITERACY

EDITOR: Judith D. Moine-Boothe

ISSN 0737-6707

Notes on Literacy is published quarterly by SIL International and serves field literacy programs by sharing information of a practical and theoretical nature with literacy field workers. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily express official policy of SIL International. Permission to use articles, either in full or in part, must be obtained from the editor.

Standing orders for this publication should be placed with:

International Academic Bookstore
SIL International.
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236
USA

Readers are invited to submit inquiries, comments, or manuscripts for publication to:

Editor of Notes on Literacy
SIL International
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236
USA

Communication with the editor may also be made via e-mail at the following address: judy_boothe@sil.org

Submit copies of manuscripts on computer media (MS-DOS or MAC format) along with a paper copy of the manuscript. Please include a brief biographical note with any manuscript.

© 1999 by SIL International

All Rights Reserved

Long Words

Ursula Wiesemann, SIL Germany

Ursula Wiesemann worked among the Kaingang Indians in Brazil from 1958–1978, and she headed the teacher training school for them in 1970–71. She obtained a Ph.D. degree in Germany in 1966. Since 1978 she has been a linguistics consultant for the Africa Area of SIL and is involved in training indigenous linguists.

Why do words have to be so long that potential readers, after mastering the letters of the alphabet, syllables, and short words, still cannot manage them? It seems that long words are hard to read in any language. This is not because anyone wants them to be. They just are. The real question is: what constitutes a long word in any given language? Can words be too short for easy reading? What word length is just right? How is word length determined in any language? Is it the same for all languages? Is there such a thing as a psycholinguistic unit "word" which, of course, would have to be language specific?

Obviously, whoever determines long words for a particular language has reason to write parts of words together. The researcher probably looks at grammatical criteria balanced with phonological arguments. Some native speakers decide that the name for any given object should be written as one word, no matter how it is constructed, e.g., houseforsnakemovingwithvapouronrails or pathforflyingthingstolandandtakeoff, both of which this author has encountered in African languages. Are there any arguments that have been overlooked in this crucial orthography decision?

German is notorious for its kilometer-long words. It has always been felt that these words can be learned with enough practice. Obviously not as easily as we adults remember from our school experience. The latest spelling reform recently to become law in Germany (1998) tries to simplify the spelling rules, apparently with success. Where this reform is being taught, German children are making 20 percent fewer mistakes. Concerning word division, the law states that normally words should not be joined. Whenever they are joined, it needs to be spelled out by rules. As a result, many combinations are now disjoined, and many arbitrary rules are done away with.

All the "long words" I have encountered so far in different languages are combinations of shorter units that are, in grammatical terms, simple words. Often the feeling is that they need to be joined on the basis of grammatical structures, and certain phonological features sometimes reinforce this feeling. So in Kaingang (Brazil), adding the particle *ti* at the very end can nominalize whole clauses. The whole structure is spoken with an intonation pattern showing it to be a close knit unit, both phonologically and grammatically. It was clear that those units were "words" in the language.

The other complex that causes long words in many languages is the verbal phrase, consisting of the main verb and its many particles, maybe including other incorporated verbs, and even the object. The argument often advanced is as follows. None of those parts have any easily identified meaning all by themselves; the meaning can be understood only in the combination of the parts. So, languages are full of long words that very few readers master with lots and lots of practice.

It has long been held that orthography should be based on the sound structure of a language. The phoneme is—and this author believes with good reason—the unit on which to base the choice of the letters of the alphabet or whatever symbols from which the linguist is allowed to choose. The **SYLLABLE**, though hard to teach to nonreaders, is of crucial importance to determine such differences as that between consonants and vowels. Vowels and consonants need to be written with different symbols so as not to confuse new readers, even where they are phonetically as similar as the vowel [I] and the consonant (palatal semivowel) [y] or [j]. A classic problem in African languages concerns the syllabic nasal. Though it functions as syllable nucleus and has variants that are different from those of the nasal consonants, it is normally written with the same symbols as the nasal consonants it sounds like, causing confusion to the new readers. Wherever a symbol different from that of the nasal consonants has been tested this was eagerly accepted by the people, except by those educated in a European language. Often these educated people are the ones who make the decisions, however, resulting in unnecessary complexities for the new reader.

In determining word units, linguists have long recognized that grammatically free and phonologically bound particles, the clitics, should not be treated as individual words, particularly if the grammatical boundaries do not coincide with the syllable boundaries, as for example in "I'm". There is one question of the syllable, however, that has not been asked. Recognizing the difference between grammatically simple and complex words, how many syllables may the longest simple grammatical words contain before being difficult to read? What is the limit in the language? Are there any grammatically simple words that are too long or too complicated to read in the language?

If it is true that simple words are not too long to read, then their length in terms of syllable count can be taken as a measure of how many syllables may be safely joined into one word. In this respect languages do indeed differ. Some languages have simple words of up to three syllables, others of six or more. It is safe to assume that **any word containing up to as many syllables as the longest simple word allows should be easy to read** in that language. Anything beyond that should be tested before it is adopted as an orthography rule. Is it safe to add one more possible syllable? Or two? It is always safe to stick to the length limit of the simple word!

There are many ways to break up long words so that they become readable. The criteria that have traditionally been applied contain them. Clitics can always be joined to the word next to them even when they pertain to a longer structure, to mention only one strategy. The rule of thumb should be: **if you can separate what you perceive of being parts of a word, you must!**

Surely reading is not a matter of sounding out individual unconnected words that have to contain all the information that the context would supply. A fluent reader is one who reads ahead looking for the message in the combination of words. Therefore, the words have to be short enough to be taken in at a glance so that the looking ahead can take place. If the reader has to puzzle out a long word, he has forgotten the context by the time he is done.

The Kaingang reacted early on against the long words presented to them, so the decision was made to keep phonological units together by joining them with hyphens. The teachers being trained decided that these hyphens were helpful in reading, so they struggled to learn where to write them. After a year of struggling, they decided that the hyphens should be abandoned. Surprisingly, nobody seems to miss the hyphens as they read. The consequence is that in the Kaingang New Testament most of the words are monosyllabic, very few have three or four syllables.

For a while there was concern that perhaps the words had been cut up too much. People seemed to read haltingly, not fluently. But then in 1997, at a gathering of schoolteachers from the three Brazilian states in which the Kaingang live, a basic orthography decision was taken. Some teachers had wanted to introduce certain symbols prevalent in Portuguese but absent in Kaingang. After three days of intensive discussion, the unanimous decision was made to retain the present orthography without change. "We may reconsider the question in 200 years when our language might have changed," someone remarked.

One year later I joined the teachers again in one of their training sessions. To my surprise all the teachers were now writing Kaingang just about perfectly. After their decision as to how the language should be written, they had simply learned the system. Not only had the teachers learned the system, but also new readers were reading texts perfectly fluently. The orthography decision the year before had given everyone the confidence that this is what their language should look like.

Still, I decided to discuss the question of morphemic writing with one of the teachers. He had never seen any problems with it and was against bringing up the subject. There is only one morpheme that I figured needed to be hooked onto the verb it follows. One of the imperatives has two forms, *ni* as in *han ni!* 'do it sometime' and *-mni* as in *vemni!* 'look at it sometime'. The teachers wanted to write the second example as *vem ni*, although there is no such word as *vem* in the language. Obviously, the Kaingang do not worry about splitting this morpheme.

In conclusion here are some questions for further consideration. Which language comes up with the longest simple word? Maybe the answer to that question tells us something about how long words may be before they are completely unreadable. Perhaps there is a general principle at work. And finally, the discussion in this article pertains only to languages that are written alphabetically. How does that compare to syllabic or word writing?

Introduction to a Bilingual Schooling Typology through Three Examples

Scott McCracken

Scott McCracken graduated from Waterloo University in Ontario, Canada with a general, non-major degree. He attended Canada SIL, where he completed his literacy training. Scott has served as a short-term member of SIL in Cameroon, West Africa.

What do you do when the bilingual program you propose first requires acceptance by someone who is familiar with only a very different version of bilingual education? This question is especially important when one considers there are characteristics that make the difference between a viable program and those with a poor success record. As shall be presented here there are hundreds of possible programs, each of which may be termed bilingual education. What is needed is some way to clarify distinctions, make comparisons between different bilingual contexts, and generally guard against the potential confusion and miscommunication regarding what exactly is meant by the term "bilingual education" in a particular situation.

One purpose of this article is to compare three examples of bilingual schooling. In the process, reference will be made to two other examples, but these two will be mainly for the sake of Mackey's typology (1972:149–71). This typology provides a reference basis, as well as an aid for delineating three main areas of comparison. As will become apparent, this typology is not complete, but the reader will be equipped with what is needed to expand this typology to apply to his or her own situations. The purpose of comparing the three examples is to apply Mackey's typology as a theoretical framework in order to be able to better predict and evaluate types of bilingual schooling in their potential for success. The three main examples will be termed "American", "Canadian", and "PNG" (Papua New Guinea). These terms are simply derived according to their different countries of origin, and they are not intended to imply that they typify entire national systems. This should become apparent as the historical context and development of the American and Canadian examples are considered.

The historical points that follow here are extracted from the review found in Arias and Casanova (1993). In the case of the United States, bilingual schooling was a part of its educational landscape prior to the 1900s. German, French, Dutch, Norwegian, and Swiss bilingual schools, among others, had existed in the U.S. until the First World War when "xenophobia" prompted an English Only campaign as part of an Americanization movement already begun in 1906 (Oller 1993:3). However, by 1963 this sociopolitical climate had been forgotten, at least in Florida where an influx of Cuban exiles prompted local bilingual educational programs. Between this and the precedents being then set by UNESCO regarding literacy and the role of language in development, there came a period lasting until 1980 where much became established in terms of the rights of minority groups (Arias and Casanova 1993:6–9).

Since 1980, however, the U.S. has seen the re-emergence of the English Only movement, largely in reaction against large immigration numbers. Arias and Casanova state, however, that this should not be viewed as a major shift from prior to 1980, because despite the advances made in terms of rights, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was viewed more as a poverty program than something mainstream. In 1978 the American melting pot idea was evident in the mandate that bilingualism be "transitional to English". Other moves in 1984 and in 1988 can be seen as merely further steps toward funding that increasingly went to "bilingual" schools where the first language is not used at all (Arias and Casanova 1993:10–12).

In the case above, the term bilingual has been redefined to mean a monolingual (in this case English) curriculum where the predominant and primary language of the students is not English. Besides appearing to reduce the term bilingual to mere political jargon, the above illustrates how variation in the meaning of the term bilingual can lead to confusion. The redefinition also raises the question as to what is a bilingual school or what does bilingual education really mean? In this case bilingual schooling can be described in general terms as a curriculum in a second language in relation to the student's vernacular (Arias and Casanova 1993:3,11). In a strict technical sense bilingualism is present in schooling when a significant portion of the students in a particular school have a mother tongue different than the national language, even when the latter is the **only** language of instruction at that school. The question is whether such a bilingual context can be appropriately also called bilingual schooling. Mackey's type "SAT-1" matches the above situation and for the purposes of this article will be labeled as our "American" example.[1]

The general description "learning a second language...to the student's vernacular" also overlooks the significant difference in academic success rates among students where the only language of instruction is different than their vernacular. IQ tests administered in English to U.S. immigrants at the turn of the 1900s found that they scored lower than **concurrent** testing of previous immigrants. This prompted the attitude that bilingualism was somehow detrimental to intelligence development. It has been said that every school of psychology has attempted some kind of interpretation of this data reflecting the bias of their own particular school of thought. But it has also been observed that the amount of light shed was insignificant because all were overlooking a very basic fact that the previous immigrants had already spent time in the U.S. and therefore had had time to learn English (Arias and Casanova 1993:23–24).

Nevertheless, the damage had been done in terms of proliferating incorrect beliefs that children with bilingual education suffered mental retardation, would be unable to learn at higher levels, would never be able to reach native competence, and consequently would always feel alienated. Pearl and Lambert gained recognition with their 1962 findings contradicting the popular beliefs, showing that bilingual children showed actual superiority on IQ testing. Their experiment with an immersion school in a middle-class suburb of Montreal became widely referred to as the Canadian immersion program.

This experiment cannot be regarded as typical of bilingual schooling throughout Canada (as in the different case Mackey cites when describing his SAM type). It might have been more appropriately called the Lambert model, if not for Lambert himself, then for the Montreal suburb of St. Lambert where the experiment took place. Nevertheless the "Canadian" label has remained. [Oller refers to it as the Canadian program throughout his text.]

---

[1] See the appendix to this article for an explanation of terms from Mackey's typology.

The success of this experiment led U.S. educators to take notice and see whether it might be duplicated in the U.S. At this point the Mackey model becomes useful. Mackey cites three main areas of diversity among bilingual schools and thereby shows how the term bilingualism is not any one thing in itself but is tied to a variety of references. Therefore, in discourses on bilingualism, we need to distinguish between bilingualism in relation to student background, in relation to school curriculum type, in relation to the regional context, and in relation to the national linguistic context. The details for these are included in the appendix. The American example (Mackey's type SAT) can be viewed as follows.

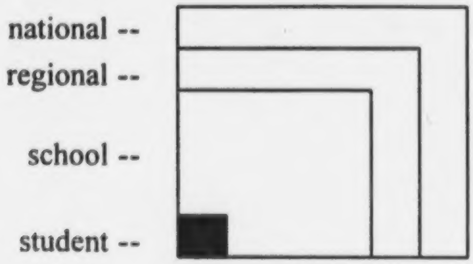


Figure 1

The darkened box represents the student's mother tongue as different than the school language. The school language is the same here as the regional and national language. The difference between the U.S. situation and the Canadian example of Lambert's experiment (Mackey's type SAT-2) can be readily seen in Figure 2. The Lambert experiment involved English speaking students with English speaking middle-class parents. The region though partly bilingual is predominantly French. The nation though officially bilingual is more English than French.

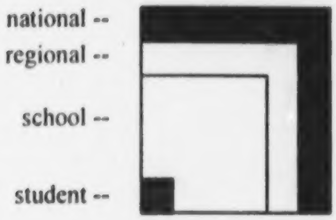


Figure 2

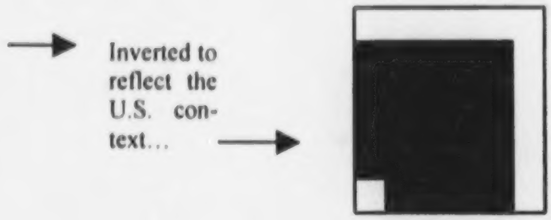


Figure 3

Figure 2 is taken directly from Mackey's typology, but if we standardize it to the national color scheme of Figure 1 (where English is represented above as unshaded and the second language as shaded), the result is Figure 3. It now becomes apparent that the Canadian example is transferable to the U.S. context only for English speakers, and that this is entirely different than the educational challenge faced in Figure 1 by non-English mother tongue students in the U.S. The Lambert model is, therefore, not as readily transferable to the U.S. education aims as educators there might have wished. The dissimilarity between the Canadian and American contexts grows as we consider student background factors other than language.

In Miami, Florida, Cuban immigrants were comprised of middle-class professional parents. Their education and established professional identities disposed them to providing positive reinforcement with their children's "immersion" into English in the U.S. education system. A significant problem exists in the U.S. when Native Americans or Spanish-speaking children from low-income families do not have the home reinforcement above, nor the mother tongue reinforcements through the school, regional, or national contexts.

The success of the Lambert experiment must look closely at the roles of home and national reinforcements of the student's mother tongue, how these contribute toward the student's positive approach to an immersion program, and the subsequent success of such a program in terms of social integration, of national cohesion, and of graduation rates. Self-identity for the Lambert students in regards to their mother tongue is not in question, and as members of the social middle class there largely exists not only expectancy for success but also a reinforced confidence that success is achievable.

Figure 2 is an immersion program. When looked at narrowly, taking into account only school language and student mother-tongue language, according to Mackey's model Figure 1 is also in effect an "immersion" program. This similarity indicates that the success of Lambert's program does lie in the other influential factors of both parental background and the regional and national linguistic contexts. The success was not the school program per se, because in the U.S. the school program had an opposite effect. To distinguish between the two contrasting results, the Lambert experiment is now described as "additive" bilingualism, and the U.S. experience has been conversely described as "subtractive" bilingualism. This distinction helps one to see how the U.S. bilingual education program has also been termed a "submersion" program as opposed to one of immersion (Arias and Casanova 1993:23–24).

How do we proceed to examine more complex situations such as multiple language nations where national, regional, and school languages may all be different, and the student's mother tongue also different? Besides the complexity of four language contexts, add poverty and no previous education experience in the student's family, as well as the student's language community being itself a minority group in his home area. Where does the reinforcement that is needed come from to encourage successful learning? Before proceeding, what needs to be examined are the types of bilingual schools that are bilingual in their curriculum and not merely in terms of student mother tongue as discussed thus far. Figure 4 shows the school curriculum removed from the national and regional contexts. It also shows what is meant by a language "maintenance" program (Mackey's type SAM) where the student's mother tongue is sustained on its own track while the rest of the curriculum is completely in a second language.

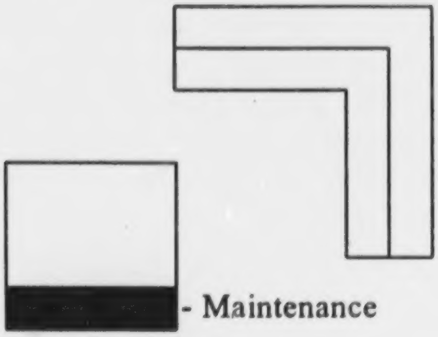


Figure 4

Mackey adds to this another example of maintenance, where curricular subjects relating to the student's culture are included in the broader curriculum and also taught in the student's mother tongue. He calls this a dual maintenance program (type DDM) since it is intended to maintain two languages not just one. It is included here as Figure 5 to show how maintenance is depicted as a continuing lateral movement from left to right within the curriculum as compared with the vertical component of an abrupt "transfer" program shown in Figure 6 (type DAT-C). The abrupt transfer program is also distinct from a gradual transfer program by introducing a diagonal component as in Figure 7 (DAT-G type). Patricia Davis's writing of a case in Peru describes this latter type where different curricular subjects are phased in for the second language at different times (Davis and Larson 1981:111–15).

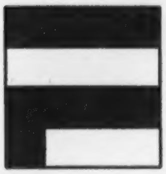


Figure 5

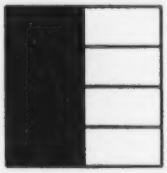


Figure 6

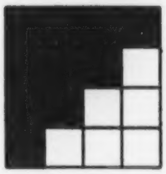


Figure 7

To Mackey's own example of JFK school in Berlin he attributes the equal maintenance program shown below in Figure 8 (DEM type) (Mackey 1972:69, 70, 80). What needs to be noted about this kind of program is that it requires highly skilled teachers who are well versed in both languages. Worth noting is that in practice, code switching occurs frequently in each class (Mackey 1972:49–53, 62–68). This begs the question whether the DEM type ever really exists in its pure form, absent of "free alteration". Mackey's typology is aimed at the curriculum plan and as such code switching is accommodated (or ignored) as part of the DEM curriculum. However, if the pure DEM form does in fact exist in practice (with code switching minimal), or if "free alteration" is the intended curriculum, then a distinction is required. Figure 9 is here proposed as a new type (DEM-CS) to portray intentional code switching (CS) in any designated class. The point to be drawn from this is that one is not confined to the Mackey model, but that it can be expanded upon once one knows how the model works. Figure 10 illustrates adaptation of Mackey's model to a situation the typology does not expressly accommodate. Figure 10 describes our third main example taken from a case in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

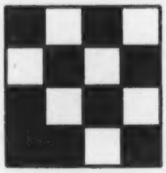


Figure 8

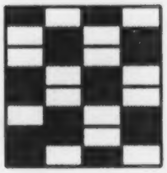


Figure 9

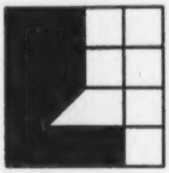


Figure 10

Let us first consider the PNG example by way of comparison to what has been covered thus far. The Canadian example was successful, but PNG differs in that minority group rural children there do not have middle class parents. Neither is the national, and frequently not even is the regional language in their mother tongue. In these respects the situation resembles remotely the American example regarding the lack of positive social reinforcements in education for minority language groups. One problem with this is that the American example is not a model for successful literacy and education of such groups.

Secondly, it is further problematic when one considers the multiple language contexts in PNG and sometimes (as in our case) even an international language (such as English) for the school curriculum. The problem with this is that not only is the mother tongue of the learner not reinforced, but also the regional context may not even reinforce the school curriculum language, thereby serving only to further abstract education away from relevancy to the learner (and thereby reducing graduate success rates). Mackey's model is limited to considering two languages distinctly and bilingually but does not consider situations where three or more languages are operating simultaneously at the various levels. The complexity becomes extensive when various bilingual contexts occur where multiple languages are in use at the regional and national levels

Finally, unlike the JFK example in Berlin, there is a shortage of highly trained teachers in PNG as is the case in many other parts of the world where literacy and development are significant issues. With shortages of highly trained teachers, it is therefore vital in PNG that some kind of mother-tongue reinforcement occurs in order to enable learners to learn. The PNG example has four of Mackey's types combined and as such represents a hybridized and separate application beyond the confines of his typology.

First, the PNG example has a MAINTENANCE element where students can ask questions about other classes and be free to use their mother tongue. This helps them maintain not only their own language, but also enables them to continue to INTEGRATE their home context with what they are learning in terms of subject matter.

Second, the maintenance portion is found to be unnecessary to continue to the final year of the curriculum. Because this portion ends before the end of the curriculum, the curriculum at this point becomes a full immersion one as opposed to maintenance only.

Third, it has an ABRUPT TRANSFER element (as depicted by the vertical change in Figure 10) following the second year, once basic reading and writing skills are established in the mother tongue. The success of this when using the MULTI-STRATEGY METHOD has sparked the following remarkable review.

> The atmosphere in all classrooms visited was one of dynamic communication and enjoyment. Children are learning how to read and write with a fluency and confidence never seen in classes in which the language of instruction is English. In schools that had grade one children who had attended the TPPS[2] class, the reading and writing fluency is nothing short of dramatic. The lack of reading materials requires children to use adult literacy material from the seventies. They seem to cope exceptionally well. What was most moving was the creative writing ability of the children. Many had written imaginative stories, some several pages long. (Deutrom 1988:5, 6)

The Multi-Strategy method does not teach mere rote learning but integrates comprehension and creativity through its story track. In so doing student interest in learning is stimulated, and students are able to see their own achievement and success early. In this way **the learning process itself provides the reinforcement for further learning**. Use of the mother tongue in the first two years not only is a familiar teaching approach, using what is already familiar to the student in order to build upon what they already know, but because it is their mother tongue, the students' own identity and community are legitimized. Such self acceptance also reinforces the ability to take on something that is as new as education in a second language. Worth noting, too, is the fact that the Multi-Strategy method does not need highly skilled teachers (as in the JFK example) to get such results. In fact, teachers of the mother-tongue portion of the curriculum need not be bilingual, thereby lending the method to utilization within remote indigenous communities prior to formal schooling elsewhere.

---

[2] In this program, the Tok Ples Pre-School (TPPS) is a preparatory school for instruciton in the vernacular before entering grade one (first year) in the formal education system in English.

The fourth element of Mackey's typology found in this case in PNG is that transference is not fully abrupt but incorporates an element of gradual transfer (as depicted by the diagonal box). This transfer is made at the last term of the second year of the mother tongue program. At this point oral English is formally introduced so that terminology learned in the mother-tongue program can be understood for the English equivalents. This is done as a preparation for classes the next year in English. The maintenance class extends this role of providing terminology equivalency in a less formal way in the following years.

This article has sought to introduce some of the developments in bilingual education through three main examples, as well as the application and extension of Mackey's typology to show its usefulness in the comparison of various bilingual-schooling situations. The article has shown how some perceptions on bilingualism have developed historically to shape what has been termed the American example. From there it was important to consider how groundbreaking was the work of Lambert in dispelling some of the myths that have impeded progress in the development of viable bilingual school curricula. From there the introduction of Mackey's typology was instrumental in helping to form an understanding here as to why, despite its success, the Lambert model, known as the Canadian example, was not readily transferable to the U.S. context. The Mackey model proved useful in delineating areas of linguistic context: national, regional, scholastic, and the home, that were examined for relevancy. His model then was helpful in the examination of school curricula and their various forms in order to consider our third and most challenging example, the one found in PNG. The PNG example remains most noteworthy in that the curriculum type combined with the Multi-Strategy method gives the students the needed reinforcements and educational foundation in their mother tongue. This approach overcomes the lack of reinforcement from other sources found elsewhere (reinforcements such as socioeconomic or national and regional linguistic sources). Because the PNG example succeeds on the basis of curriculum, it would seem to be highly adaptable to a multitude of other language contexts. It even holds the possibly of offering a successful (and economical) model that can be readily adopted in the U.S., especially for the linguistic minorities who struggle with poverty and the present educational approaches there. As with any such situation, what remains is the political resolve to see that inappropriate bilingual approaches used in the past need not impede the implementation of a more appropriate strategy in the pursuit of better programs offering greater success.

The Mackey typology has been demonstrated as a useful tool, which may be modified as needed to address particular circumstances encountered in the field. It has also been indicated that student background involves more than what that cited by the model, more than just the linguistic context of the home. Student attitudes toward success are influenced both by how much control the individual has over their circumstances, as well as by prevalent attitudes in their community toward change. These attitudes can be culturally influenced as well as by socioeconomic conditions.

Such contextual realities press the typology to numerical extremes.[3] It is not the purpose here to increase the typology but only to illustrate that the present typology, as such, serves as a simplified and workable format from which to begin a meaningful comparison and evaluation of current cases and of proposed systems. Noteworthy is that if the Multi-Strategy approach can be demonstrated to be successful in a variety of circumstances worldwide, it may reduce the effect of many of the variables that push the typology to numerical extremes. Multi-Strategy might in fact simplify the typology to curricular patterns alone by the way it appears to work well independently of contextual realities.

---

[3] If the economic paradigm is taken as an example, and simply include two divisions such as low- and middle-income families, we could in effect double the number of types over the 450 (five home times ten school curricula times nine regional contexts) that Mackey gives already. The alternate to Mackey's DEM, if found elsewhere, adds to the number of school curricula as does our PNG example, thereby increasing the typology to a potential 1,080 in number. If one chooses to pictorially represent the multiple language contexts regionally and nationally in PNG, as with other countries, this adds another marked increase (though it stretches the definition of "type" beyond that as defined by Mackey). For example, merely including a third language in the typology increases the contextual element numerically (not necessarily typologically) from nine to thirty-six. This multiplies the 1,080 figure to a mind boggling 4,320 "types". With four languages being not uncommon to find, the potential contextual combinations are 100, thereby pushing the typology to a number of 12,000 conceivable types.

Appendix: Explanation of Mackey's terms[4]

1. Curriculum in the Schools

[T]he curriculum patterns of bilingual schools vary as to (1) medium of instruction, (2) development, (3) distribution, (4) direction, and (5) change.

(1) The medium of instruction may be one language, two languages, or more; in other words, the school may have a single medium (S) or a dual medium (D) curriculum. (2) The development pattern may be one of maintenance (M) of two or more languages, or of transfer (T) from one medium of instruction to another. (3) The distribution of the languages may be different (D) or equal and the same (E). (4) The direction may be toward assimilation into a dominant culture, toward acculturation (A), or toward integration into a resurgent one, that is toward irredentism (I). Or it may be neither one nor the other, but simply the maintenance of the languages at an equal level. In this case, the languages may be equal but different (D), or equal and equivalent (E). (5) Finally, the change from one medium to another may be complete (C) or gradual (G).

1.1 Medium: Single or dual

Schools may be classified according to their languages used to convey knowledge, in contradistinction to the languages taught as subjects. Knowledge may be conveyed in one language, in two, or more.

---

[4] Editor's note: In light of the fact that many readers of this journal may not be familiar with Mackey's work, I have included extensive definitions, quoted directly from Mackey's book, *Bilingual Education in a Binational School* (1972:154–60). This source is highly recommended for further discussion and description of this model. The format of the quoted material has been adapted to fit this journal.

Single-medium schools (S)

Single-medium schools are bilingual insofar as they serve children whose home language is different from the school language, the area language, or the national language. This may be the only language used for all subjects at all times.

Dual-medium schools (D)

In contradistinction to the type of school using a single medium of instruction are those which use two media—both the home and the second language, as the case may be, to convey knowledge. These are the dual-medium schools. Some subjects are taught in one language, some in the other language. In parts of Wales, history, geography, literature, and the fine arts are taught in Welsh; mathematics, social studies, biology, and other sciences are taught in English. Dual-medium schools vary not only in what is taught but also in how much. It is thus that they may be distinguished and classified. They can be compared quantitatively by measuring the amount of time devoted to the use of each language.

So far, we have made only a static or synchronic distinction between bilingual schools—single-medium and dual-medium schools. But since education is progressive by its nature, these distinctions must also be viewed developmentally, that is, on a time scale.

1.2 Development: Transfer or maintenance

If we examine bilingual schools on the time scale, that is, from the point of view of the distribution of the languages from the first to the last year of the school's program—or a section of it—we find two patterns: the transfer pattern and the maintenance pattern, both applying to single- and dual-medium schools.

	Development	Transfer	Maintenance
MEDIUM	Single		
	Dual		

Transfer (T)

The transfer pattern has been used to convert from one medium of instruction to another. For example, in some nationality schools in the Soviet Union[5] a child may start all his instruction in his home language, perhaps that of an autonomous Soviet republic, and gradually end up taking all his instruction in the language of the Soviet Union. In schools of this type, the transfer may be gradual or abrupt, regular or irregular, the degree of regularity and gradualness being the variables available to distinguish one school from another.

Maintenance (M)

Contrariwise, the object of the bilingual school may be to maintain both languages at an equal level. This is often the pattern when both are languages of wider communication or are subject to legal provisions in the constitution which oblige schools to put both languages on an equal footing. The maintenance may be done by differentiation or by equalization.

1.3 Direction: Acculturation or irredentism (A-I)

The direction taken by the curriculum may be toward the language of wider culture, toward acculturation; or toward that of the regional, national, or neo-national culture—direction or irredentism.

1.4 Distribution: Different or equal (D-E)

The subjects in the curriculum may be distributed differently, using different subjects for each; or equally, alternating or repeating the instruction from one language to the other.

1.5 Change: Complete or gradual (C-G)

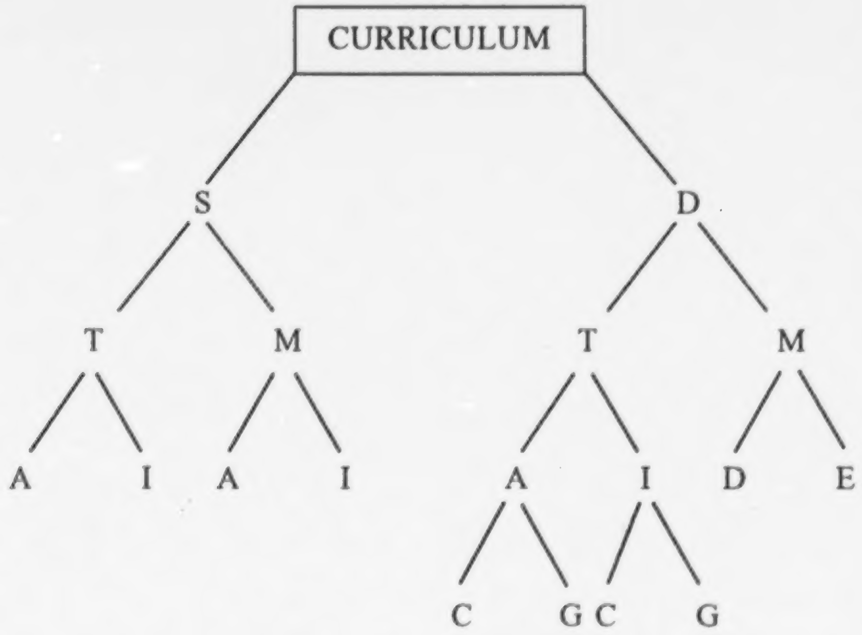
The change in direction or distribution may be complete and abrupt—using, for instance, one language one year and the other language the next—or gradual—adding more and more instruction in the other language (Mackey 1972:154–56).

---

[5] Editor's note: The Mackey material is dated 1972, prior to the break up of the former Soviet Union.

2. Curriculum patterns

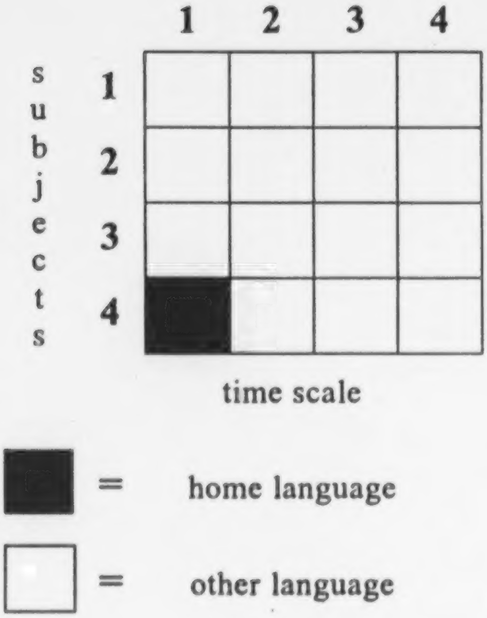
The interplay of these basic distinctions generates a limited number of possible patterns, as illustrated in the following figure:



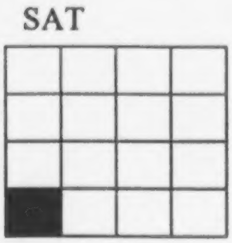
The distinctions between single (S) and dual (D) medium schools, accultural (A) and irredental (I), different (D) and equal (E), transfer (T) and maintenance (M), and complete (C) and gradual (G) change generate ten basic types of curriculum patterns. These are: SAT, SAM, SIT, SIM, DAT-C, DAT-G, DIT-C, DIT-G, DDM, and DEM. Let us see what each of these involves.

What is patterned in bilingual schooling is the use of two or more languages, one, all, or neither of which may be native to the learner and have a certain degree of dominance in his home environment. Any of the five types of home-school language relationship described above may enter the curiculum patterns described below. To represent these we shall take the unilingual home, where the language used may or may not be the school language or one of the school languages.

The curriculum, made up of subjects (vertical columns) and time units in which they are taught (horizontal columns) will be symbolized in a grid:

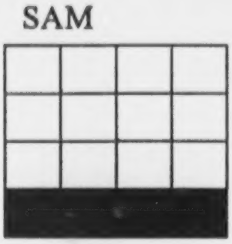

1
2
3
4
subjects
1
2
3
4
time scale
■ = home language
□ = other language

2.1 Type SAT (Single-medium Accultural Transfer)



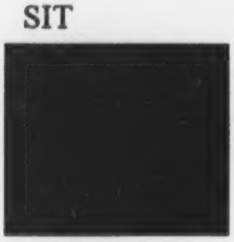
This type may transfer the language of learning from that of the home to that of the school. It may be completely accultural in that it takes no account of the language of the home. This type of single-medium acculturation is common among schools attended by the children of immigrants; for example, the English-medium schools of Italian or French immigrants in the United States.

2.2 Type SAM (Single-medium Accultural Maintenance)



In some cases, as in the bilingual schools of certain parts of Canada, the home language or dominant home language is taught as a subject without, however, being used as a medium of instruction. The maintenance of the home language as a subject may be the avowed purpose, as in the English-medium schools for French Canadians in Western Canada.

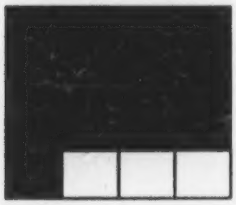
2.3 Type SIT (Single-medium Irredental Transfer)



The converse also goes by the name of bilingual schooling. Here the home or dominant home language is used as a medium. Examples of this may be found in the multiple cases of language transfer, along the borderlands of Europe, resulting from the reconquest of territory. Witness, for example, the history of transfer of languages of instruction along the frontiers of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

2.4 Type SIM (Single-medium Irredental Maintenance)

SIM

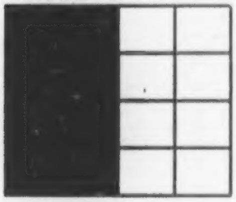


In some schools the dominant or formerly dominant national language is maintained as a school subject, as in the case of English in certain Gaelic schools of the West of Ireland.

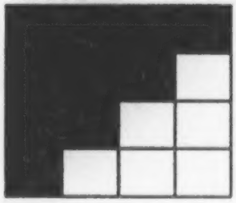
The common characteristic of all these single-medium schools is that only one language is used to transmit knowledge—a single language is used as a medium of instruction in all school subjects (although another language may be taught as a school subject, as it is in unilingual schools). For this reason we call these bilingual schools single-medium schools.

2.5 Type DAT (Dual-medium Accultural Transfer)

DAT-C



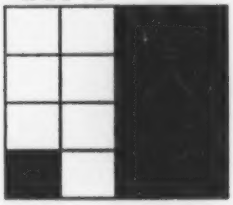
DAT-G



This type which, for obvious reasons of power and prestige is a common type, prepares children to take the rest of their education in a language or dialect which is not dominant in the home—often a language of wider communication. Many of the schools in the emerging nations were, before they emerged, of this type. English in Africa was sometimes used after the third year. In other parts of Africa it was gradually introduced from the first year.

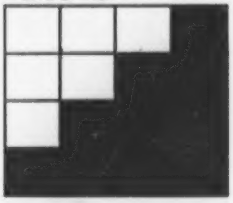
2.6 Type DIT (Dual-medium Irredental Transfer)

DIT-C



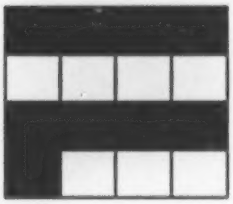
Conversely, in areas long dominated by foreign language, the medium of instruction may revert to the language of the home, the foreign language being downgraded. Early Arabization of schooling in the Sudan illustrates this type.

DIT-G



2.7 Type DDM (Dual-medium Differential Maintenance)

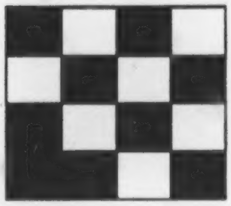
DDM



In maintaining two languages for different purposes, the difference may be established by subject matter, according to the likely contribution of each culture. Often the culture-based subjects like art, history, literature, and geography are in the dominant home language. Bilingual schools in certain parts of Wales are of this type.

2.8 Type DEM (Dual-medium Equal Maintenance)

DEM



In some schools, as those found in certain parts of Belgium, South Africa, and Canada, it has been necessary—often for political reasons—not to distinguish between languages and to give an equal chance to both languages in all domains. This is done by alternating of the time scale—day, week, month, or year—from one language to the other (Mackey 1972:157–60).

References

Anderson, Theodore. 1970. Bilingual schooling in the United States. Austin, Tex.: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Arias, M. Beatriz and Ursula Casanova, eds. 1993. Bilingual education: Politics, practice, and research. Ninety-second yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Davis, Patricia M. and Mildred L. Larson, eds. 1981. Bilingual education: An experience in Peruvian Amazonia. Dallas: SIL.

Deurom, B. 1988. Report: Visit to Enga Province. Unpublished ms.

Mackey, William Francis. 1972. Bilingual education in a binational school: A study of equal language maintenance through free alteration. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publisher.

Oller, John W. Jr., ed. 1993. Methods that work: Ideas for literacy and language teachers. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

The Challenge of Introducing the First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) into the Philippine Formal Education Program

Catherine Young

Catherine Young is from the United Kingdom. Before joining SIL, Catherine gained a B.Ed.(Hons.) degree in Applied Education at the University of Lancaster. After post-graduate studies, she taught hearing-impaired children for six years. She joined SIL in 1989 and has worked in the Philippines, primarily among the Palawano people group.

All the opinions expressed here are the author's own and not necessarily that of the Philippines Branch and should, therefore, not be attributed to the Branch.

1. Introduction

The initial project on transitional, multilingual education in the Philippines was conducted by an SIL–DECS (Department of Education, Culture and Sports) consortium over six years in the province of Ifugao in the northern Philippines. It was a program initiated in 1985 by the then DECS Supervisor of Hungduan District. The program was designed to improve the test scores of elementary grade pupils. This article will explore the development of the First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) since that initial pilot project and examine moves that are being made to spread this educational innovation through different areas of the Philippines. The situation to be discussed was current as of early 1998.

1.1 Initial setting

The pilot project took place in Hungduan District, Ifugao in the north central Philippines. The Banaue and Batad rice terraces are very close to Hungduan district. Few children in that area come to school with any knowledge of Filipino or English. The language of the home is Ifugao, in one of its variants, and in the case of the pilot project, the bridging language was Tuwali Ifugao.

Pupils in the mid-1980s had little access to written materials, such as books, magazines, and other media such as television and radio. Today, in the late 1990s, those opportunities are probably increasing a little, although books and magazines are rare in most homes. Schools often lack basic textbooks.

1.2 Need

The stated desire of the initial project was to improve the test scores of the elementary level children in Division tests. Recently, the former district supervisor, now retired from DECS and a subsequent position as a principal of a private college, informally said that the spur to the initiation of this program was shame and embarrassment. As a district supervisor, he was ashamed at the scores of the children in his district. Thus, he contacted Lou Hohulin, an SIL member who was living in a central town in the area, to see if they could develop a response to this need.

2. What is FLC-BP?

2.1 Definitions

The central hypothesis of the First Language Component-Bridging Program is that "the child who acquires reading and writing skills in the first language with rigorous bridging of language arts skills to the two second languages used as mediums of instruction in the Philippine school system will be more competent in all areas of study than the child who does not" (Hohulin 1995:1).

It is important to note that this is a BRIDGING program, not a vernacular education, mother-tongue, or bilingual education program.

According to Hohulin (1995:3), there are three major principles to FLC-BP.

1. A child's first language should be used for teaching and learning during Grades I and II.
2. The child's cultural model of the world should be used to help him process information and understand concepts as well as form new ones.
3. New concepts and skills should build on existing knowledge structures rather than bypassing them to use a rote memorization methodology.

The component, as the name applies, is just one aspect of the overall teaching-learning program. The Bridging Program (BP) is not a complete method or curriculum but rather one component; it is not a whole new means of teaching but an element of the teaching strategy.

2.2 Picture

The Bridging Program, as stated, rests on the premise that effective learning proceeds from the known to the unknown. True comprehension builds on internal thinking webs that already exist in the mind of the child. The first language is to build a bridge between what the child knows and what he does not yet know.

In the *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, Lou Hohulin (1993:1) uses a pictorial explanation for the program.

> When a child enters 1st grade, it is as though he is standing on a high cliff overlooking a fast flowing river. Across the river, on the opposite cliff edge, stands the 1st grade teacher, beckoning the child across.
>
> The cliff on which the child stands represents what he already knows—his knowledge structures and the model of the world which has been developed upon the basis of his previous 7 years of life, using his first language and cultural background.
>
> The cliff on which the teacher stands represents all that is, as yet, unknown to the child—reading, writing, math, Filipino, English, civics (Filipino life, culture, history, stories, poems, etc.). The teacher needs to bring the child from one side to another.
>
> A rope thrown across the chasm is the analogy used for education without a planned bridging program. Even if the child catches the rope, he still needs to climb down the cliff and risk being swept away in the fast current river—a metaphor for confusion and failing to learn. Elementary school dropouts, very common in rural areas of the Philippines, are certainly in this group. The bridge is more stable, offering a more direct and secure route.

2.3 National bilingual policy

At this point, it is important to note the bilingual policy of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports in the Philippines. Filipino and English are seen as the two major languages of instruction. The policy allows for the use of vernacular languages as an **auxiliary**, i.e., a "help", something alongside the major languages of the classroom. Thus, although there is a policy for bilingual education, the vernacular is not an explicit part of that policy. Within the curriculum of Philippine schools there are certain subjects that should be taught in Filipino and certain subjects that should be taught in English. The bilingual policy allows for the vernacular to be used alongside either of these as an auxiliary. In practice, the teacher may teach Math and Science, subjects which are to be taught in English, but use the vernacular to give added and clearer explanations.

2.4 First Language Component in practice

Typically, the curriculum of first and second grade pupils consists of the following areas:

- Filipino class
- English class
- Civics and culture class
- Math

As it was originally conceived, the First Language Component–Bridging Program is added to the day's program, then a full sixty-minute period of the day is given over to teaching and learning wholly in the first language. During this time, all concepts and skills that are to be taught later in the day are first introduced in the first language. As the child's first language is used for teaching the basic skills of reading and writing, reading readiness activities such as auditory and visual discrimination are conducted in the first language as well as the teaching of early decoding skills developing to trilingual and bilingual grammar exercises and reading. Math readiness activities are also introduced through the first language to develop early mathematical concepts and relationships.

3. Initial results

The project was begun in Hungduan district with three schools and four classes. Hapao school had both a control and an experimental class. Magguk school had an experimental class, and Bokiawan school had a control class.

At a later time, children from Kiangan Central School were used for testing the evaluation instrument, and a comparative statistical analysis was done.

It is significant to see that there is a greater improvement in the Filipino reading scores than in the English reading scores. This is probably due to these Philippine languages—Tuwali and Filipino—being, like many, related in vocabulary and grammatical structure and therefore easier for Filipino children to learn. English is completely different in both these categories.

	Tuwali reading	Filipino reading	English reading	English grammar
Hapao experimental School	18.25	15.83	16.58	18.00
Hapao control school	12.29	10.83	13.04	14.42
Maguk experimental school	18.38	15.66	13.61	18.33
Bokiawan control school	9.05	9.15	9.60	10.72

Further research has been done since this time, continuing the validation, but all evaluation has been in the general area of Mountain Province/Ifugao.

4. Continuing training

In recent years Dr. Gloria Baguingan, who was linked with the initial project, has had a program at Nueva Vizcaya Institute of Science and Technology that leads to an M.A. in Contextualized Education. One component of that course teaches the FLC-BP. Over the last eight or nine years, Dr. Baguingan has trained more than 300 teachers, mostly from the Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya regions, to use this methodology in their classrooms. The summer course includes preparation of teaching devices—visual aids such as flash cards, flip charts, posters, and concertina books—to promote and support the use of the vernacular as a bridge to Filipino and English.

These teachers have returned to their school districts and have implemented this approach among their first and second grade pupils. As of May 1998 in the area of the original project, there are at least two teachers continuing to use the full program and some using selected aspects of the approach more than ten years after it was initiated, according to Lou Hohulin.

5. Transfer to other areas

Since the early 1990s when the study in Tuwali was completed, there have been various moves to encourage and promote the use of the FLC-BP in formal education in other parts of the country.

5.1 Natunin (Balangao area, Northern Luzon)

In April and May 1996, Dr. Baguingan led a four-week, very well-attended workshop using the model of the work in Tuwali Ifugao to promote the use of the First Language Component in the Balangao area. This workshop was attended by around eighty people, although many were preschool teachers and day-care workers. Some teachers are continuing to use the program in elementary schools, and the principles are well used in preschool classes.

5.2 Lubuagan Kalinga (Mountain Province)

An SIL team is using the structure of the Tuwali pilot project to promote the use of Lubuagan Kalinga in the schools in their area. Some teachers have been sent to the summer program at Nueva Vizcaya Institute of Science and Technology (NVIST), and there are moves to further promote the First Language Component approach among the administrators in that region.

5.3 National academic circles

Papers have been given by Dr. Baguingan and various SIL Philippine Branch members at different educational conferences sharing the results of the Tuwali Ifugao study and encouraging others in different parts of the country to consider the use of a similar approach in their school districts. A paper was given at a Language in Education Conference last year by Mary Ruth Wise of SIL Peru about the practice of bilingual education in Peru, raising questions about language policy in the Philippines and the use of the vernacular in mainstream education.

5.4 Benguet State University

In May 1997, a workshop took place in contextualized, multilingual education for teachers of first and second grade children. Part of this workshop involved writing bilingual—vernacular and Filipino—reading materials. This workshop was partly hosted at the SIL Northern workshop center, and SIL staff participated in the instruction and materials preparation. The workshop was also sponsored financially and with personnel from *Komisyong sa Wikang Filipino* (KWF), the agency for the promotion and development of the Filipino language. The teachers mostly came from Benguet and Mountain province with one teacher from Apayao.

In May 1998, another group prepared three-language teaching aids and was instructed in the procedures of the FLC-BP. The intention was that the teachers from the 1997 session would return for the 1998 session, but in reality the overlap was only one teacher. This workshop was led by Professor Edith Guitilen of Benguet State University in La Trinidad, Baguio.

It is worth noting that three of the main proponents of this program are themselves all members of Indigenous Cultural Communities of the Philippines. Two of them had their first links with SIL as first grade teachers in small villages, when they participated in a writers workshop. This emphasized the importance of networking and building relationships in the community.

6. National level encouragement

In May 1998, the Secretary of Education attended the closing program of the teacher-training program at Benguet State University mentioned above. She was impressed by the wide-range and number of materials produced and suggested that there be a division-wide experiment. She stated that funding help would be available to implement the program. There has also been talk of transferring this approach to Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, and training teachers to adopt this approach.

7. Challenges of transfer

If the preceding comments are viewed as the introduction, the next section will comment on the challenges of transferring this program widely within the formal Philippine education system. It has to be remembered that, as in many countries, the languages of the Philippines are complex in their use. The following are some examples.

- English: educational and national uses, includes TV, radio, Congress, and some higher education, but not all.
- Filipino: various educational and national uses. Also used, as Tagalog, by many people in Luzon and the Visayas.
- Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon: regional languages.

Many adults and children use a mixture of languages in different circumstances.

L1	L2	L3	L4
Palawano	Filipino	English	
Palawano	Tausug/Sama Mapun	Filipino	English
Agutaynen	Cuyunon	Filipino	English
Ilocano	Filipino	English	
Matigsalug Manobo	Cebuano	Filipino	English
Sama	Tausug	Filipino	English
Cebuano	Filipino	English	
Sama Mapun	Filipino	English	
Kankanaey	Ilocano	Filipino	English
Tboli	Ilongo	Filipino	English
Kalinga	Ilocano	Filipino	English
Ifugao Mayoyao	Ilocano	English	

7.1 Resources

As is the case throughout the world, financial resources are limited. Materials need to be produced for the courses. The method is fairly "resource-intensive". In the Benguet State University courses and the Natunin courses, it was estimated that each participant spent around P1800 on materials for producing the classroom aids necessary for implementing the FLC program in first grade classes. Looked at in Western terms, US$48 is not a great deal of money for one year's teaching resources which are estimated to last between three to five years. To this point, however, there has been little or no subsidy for this outlay; the sum amounts to about one-fourth of a teacher's salary for one month. It could be seen as a major investment.

The Tuwali program used trilingual storybooks. These would need to be produced for each language to which this approach might spread. Shell books are an option, but with the wide range of cultural situations—northern Mountain, Negrito, Southern Mountain, Moslem, Lowland—their use and development would have to be assessed carefully.

The production of written materials in the languages of the indigenous cultural communities implies the use of a stable orthography in each. In some languages, more linguistic work would need to be done to establish the orthography. This would require personnel resources from SIL or SIL's involvement in training local people to make informed decisions with appropriate testing.

In the past, these books have been published in a conventional manner after being computer typeset. Is this creating unfair expectations? In the future, would it be necessary to return to a more basic method of duplication, e.g., using a Gestetner or silkscreen? Can the quality of materials that have been used in the Tuwali program, the 1997 Benguet State University program, or those being developed for the Kalinga program be sustained if the approach spreads over a Division or even wider in the nation?

7.2 Roles

This article will now focus on five major roles related to the development of this approach and examine the impact that multilingual literacy might have.

Teacher. This approach has many implications for the role of the teacher. More responsibility is imposed on the teacher for the content of the lessons than in the conventional approaches used in the school system, where textbooks are provided and in some ways the schoolteacher has to be an interpreter of the culture for the pupils. It is the teacher who selects the integration of the cultural elements into the trilingual materials and teaching devices, therefore, her own perspective of her culture will affect the view that the children then receive.

Conventional teaching generally involves knowledge at one level, yet here the schoolteacher must monitor comprehension and the building of concepts across three languages, noting difficulties and remediating where these occur. This requires sophisticated questioning skills. Children are bright. This author does not believe that one cannot ask identical questions in each of the languages. This would cause the approach to revert to rote memorization.

This is a change of focus for many teachers who have been accustomed to a different approach. If the program were to become institutionalized, there would need to be upper level changes in the teacher training procedures at national level, affecting many academics whose security rests in the methodologies they have successfully taught for many years.

The role of the teacher within the school is an issue. Unfortunately but traditionally, grade one teachers in the Philippines are at the bottom of the heap. Those with prestige teach grade six. If the grade one and two teacher has the specialist training for contextualized learning, this will affect the hierarchy of the elementary school. Grade one teachers have been the ones looking for promotion from the bottom to one of the grade levels where they will receive a greater degree of prestige. Some teachers trained in the past have been affirmed by their administrators for their competence and the good test results of their pupils and consequently been promoted to a higher grade level where their skills are not then used. There would need to be a different perspective on the role of the grade one teacher and perhaps a willingness to forgo promotion on the part of the teacher.

With increased national mobility due to employment opportunities, this also affects the number of teachers who have the mother tongue of their pupils. It may be seen to prejudice the teachers from outside the language area if they are unable to teach first or second grade. This may be viewed as a minor issue.

Administrator. If the curriculum innovation comes from the outside, what does it say about the role of the local administrator? Part of the challenge is to have the administrator take ownership of the concept and then instigate the approach himself within the Division. Otherwise, there will be limited success. In the Philippines, relationships are of primary importance. It would be difficult for a local teacher to adopt this approach without the support of her local administrator.

In talking to teachers who have been through the Benguet State University workshops, their main concern about the degree to which they would use the approach was the attitude of their local administrator to what they were learning.

Pupil. The pupil is expected to succeed in three languages. He must learn and perform thinking skills that have hitherto not been expected of those pupils going through the system. This is perceived as probably being to the advantage of the student, however, one criticism of the approach has been that, with the sixty minutes assigned to the First Language Component (FLC) at the beginning of the school day, it seems that something has to "give." Once the teachers are engaged in the program, this does not seem to be a particular issue. In encouraging others to adopt this approach, however, teachers, pupils, and parents must perceive that the inclusion of the FLC does not happen to the exclusion of other curriculum areas.

Originally, in the Tuwali pilot project, the school day was lengthened. However, latterly teachers scheduled their classes in such a way that lessons in the first language were a part of using the language as a "auxiliary" in the time allotted for each class. This meant that the teachers developed a rigorous program for using the first language as an auxiliary medium within the curriculum.

As mentioned regarding schoolteachers, there is increased mobility in the Philippines. Areas with mixed languages are increasing, and this approach requires a teacher and pupils to have the same first language in common. The pupil in a class who does not share the first language of his classmates has problems and may be singled out as a result, particularly if the result of the FLC is a raising of cultural awareness and pride. The Hohulins recommend that, in mixed classrooms, the regional language is used as the first language from which to bridge to Filipino and then English.

Parents. Parents from families where each parent speaks a different vernacular may find problems with the language deemed as the first language by the school. In mixed language areas or language group borders, the language to be used may become contentious. Boundaries can be fuzzy; they are rarely clear geographical features as is found in some parts of the world. Thus, to give greater value to the language of one parent over another may cause family conflict.

Lou Hohulin reported the evaluations and reactions of parents to the Tuwali experiment. Many expressed positive views about the teaching of their first language to children in school, e.g., watching their children reciting poems and dialogues and hearing Tuwali stories. However, others were caused to admit that they themselves stumble over reading their own mother tongue, and their children were becoming more able readers and writers of the first language than their parents. It is important that we address this issue if first language is to be introduced into the formal education program, otherwise we are giving children skills the adults do not have access to—a problem in many societies.

7.3 Political implications

Language is an important political issue in the Philippines today. Filipino and English were featured in the recent election campaign. For the first time in recent history, the presidential inauguration speech on June 12, 1998 was given in Filipino. Language attitudes are changing, and sensitivity to those changes is essential.

To promote the FLC in Mindanao raises political issues. The acceptance of Filipino as the national language is low. Cebuano has more speakers than Tagalog, the language on which Filipino is based. Would a strategy of bridging from the language of the Indigenous Cultural Community (ICC) to Filipino and then to English be acceptable? There is potential for major problems of compliance among politicians, administrators, teachers, and parents. Even in Benguet, around Baguio in Luzon, teachers wanted to bridge from the language of the ICC directly into English. They did not perceive Filipino to be a language used by the children in their area, nor did they perceive it to be a necessary language for children to learn.

The *Komisyong sa Wikang Filipino* appears, however, to have a nationalistic agenda in promoting the use of Filipino, asserting that the wider use of Filipino could bring increased national unity. To exclude Filipino from the process of bridging would seem to remove an implicit aim of the development of the program.

The tensions of language use and identity become more pronounced when one considers the Muslim groups of south and southwestern Mindanao. Could such a program be effectively used in those areas, or would it be seen to be undermining their ethnic and religious distinctiveness?

These are all questions that need to be considered.

8. How should we proceed?

8.1 Vernacular preschool education

Vernacular preschool education is an approach designed to prepare children socially, emotionally, and linguistically for entering a school system where the languages are different to the language of the home. Some of the above challenges also exist, however, such classes operate outside the formal education system. The classes are outside the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, but they are usually in conjunction with the Department of Social Welfare and Development where policies can be at a more localized and responsive level.

Early training in auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, and other prereading and prenumeracy skills could be done in the mother tongue. With the similarity in format of many, but not all, Philippine languages to Filipino, children could make this transfer on entering grade one.

8.2 Specialized teachers

Some teachers want to promote this approach, particularly those who work in areas where there is little language shift and they themselves speak the same first language as their pupils. This could be a specialty that remains to be available to schoolteachers as advanced training in the same way as it is being currently developed in Benguet State University and has been taught in Nueva Vizcaya Institute of Science and Technology. In the same way as Philippine elementary teachers are acquiring special skills in English, Filipino, Information Technology, and MAPE (Music, Art, and Physical Education), teachers could gain a specialist qualification in contextualized education and develop curriculum and materials, as necessary, with the same level of support that teachers of other subject specialties gain.

9. Conclusion

This examination has tried to touch on some of the areas of challenge that need to be addressed before participating in decisions about wider use of this First Language Component–Bridging Program approach. As stated at the beginning of this article, this is this author's view. Other Philippine Branch members would offer other views, e.g., some advocating widespread involvement, others even more cautious. This author welcomes input and feedback concerning parallels the reader might see and recommendations he or she might give.

References

Hohulin, E. Lou. 1993. The First Language Component: A bridging educational programme. Philippine Journal of Linguistics 24.1.

———. 1995. The First Language Component: A bridging educational program. Notes on Literacy 21(1):1–21.

Review

The Politics of Writing. By Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič. London: Routledge, 1997. Pp. 261. Hardcover £45.00, Paperback £13.00

Reviewed by Linda Seyer, SIL-UK

Ethos

Writing, like reading, is a social practice. This book examines the social and cultural contexts in which an act of writing takes place. The authors, each with varied experienced teaching writing at all levels, propose a new model of the writing process. Romy Clark currently coordinates the Academic Support Programme at Lancaster University, and Roz Ivanič is a lecturer in linguistics there. Together they explore the political nature of the writing process, the way the writers identify themselves within a text, the different purposes of writing an author may bring to the discourse, and the relationship between writer and reader. Their aspiration is that their perspective of viewing writing as a social practice, inseparable from its immediate social situation and cultural context, will provide a basis for a new view of writing.

Content

In the first chapter the authors spend an unnecessary amount of time validating their authority in speaking about writing and their collective experience. Chapters 2 and 3 present the viewpoint that writing, like literacy as described by Barton, is never autonomous and cannot be separated from the social and cultural context in which it occurs. The book distinguishes between the context of situation and the context of culture. The CONTEXT OF SITUATION includes the immediate situation, the physical environment, time and place, the people involved, and the social relationship between them. The second is the CONTEXT OF CULTURE, encompassing the sets of beliefs, values, and ideas, and the effect of these on the social relationship between writer and reader. The context of situation can be thought of as the local writing environment, and the context of culture as the wider, sociocultural context. The first exists and is determined by the second. The act of writing cannot be understood apart from the context of both. The social practice of writing is also political within a society. Powerless social groups can be excluded from contributing to the "cultural capital", the pool of knowledge and ideas that shape a society. The press can help to maintain the current ideologies and exclude others. It is important that all members of a democratic society have an equal opportunity to express their ideas, and writing as a social practice is one means well suited to that end.

Chapters 4 through 7 look at the writing process itself, the way an author establishes his identity within a written text, and the relationship between writer and reader. After examining some models of the writing process, some linear and others recursive, the authors propose a new model that focuses less on writing as a cognitive process and more as a series of culturally shaped practices. Their model is one of a circle of circles that the writer actually leaves and renters at any point. It encompasses the cognitive processes that occur during writing, but it also includes ongoing input from the social environment which shapes the text during the writing process. The author of a text not only plans his texts and selects ideas on which to write, but also anticipates how his readers will react to different ways of expressing those ideas. The real-life example is an interview with the playwright, Trevor Griffiths, discussing how he writes a play with the cognitive processes and input from the social environment being intertwined in the writing process.

The different reasons that people choose to write have an effect both on the writing process and product, involving both macro-purposes and micro-purposes. The authors identify the macro-purposes of writing as shaping and challenging ideologies in a society. Micro-purposes of writing are the writer's immediate motivations to write. The process of writing involves both of these types of purposes. The writer's gender, class, race, and sexuality are factors which enter into the different identities an author can choose to express different ideological positions for different readerships. The examples are well explained and make their points well.

The relationship of the writer to the reader is carefully examined. The reader is an important part of the context of situation in which a writing act takes place. The authors give a list of linguistic tools used in writing for establishing and maintaining the relationship between the writer and his reader within a text. Then they move on to power relations between writer and reader, focusing first on the writer's intended meanings and then the reader's interpretations. They conclude the chapter by giving an example of a play, where each of their authors (with widely differing political viewpoints) give their interpretation of the play and the playwright gives comments on his intended meaning.

In chapter 8, the authors take a detour and discuss some pet-peeves about standardization and correctness in teaching writing. They argue against the undue emphasis being placed on standards in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The real value of writing is being able to use words to create meaning and pass on ideas, and the mechanical aspects are trivial and subjective. They claim that this emphasis allows certain class groups to exclude other groups from expressing their ideas in the mainstream press in a democratic society. Teachers of language should make learners aware of these conventions and the value that some segments of society place on them (institutions of higher education), but they also emphasize that they have no intrinsic value of their own.

In the concluding chapter, the authors explore the implications of their theories. Writing is a social practice, helping to circulate and mould ideas within a certain social and cultural context. A society should be structured so that all groups and individuals can participate in the democratic processes with a full and equal voice, including through the written word. This would require changes in the ownership and management of the print media and publishing industries. The authors have concluded the book with ten principles of teaching writing which embody their view of writing as a social practice inseparable from the social and cultural context in which it occurs.

The principles are as follows.

- Take a critical language awareness approach to the teaching of writing.
- Raise consciousness about issues of power and status in relation of writing.
- Discuss differences between speaking and writing.
- Raise consciousness about how writing is embedded in social context.
- Demystify writing processes and practices.

- Allow time for thinking, discussing, and drafting in order to engage with meaning.
- Ensure that writing in pedagogic settings has communicative purpose.
- Discuss the relationship between context, purpose, and form.
- Raise awareness about the importance of identity in all types of writing.
- Pay attention to the role of the reader in writing.
- Take a critical approach to correctness and appropriateness.

Critique

Although this is not a book I would have initially picked up to read in the field of literacy, I found as I read through it gradually that it had some important points to make about writing and writers. The book is generally well written and very logical. The authors have done a good job of examining a murky subject, the writing process, and examined it systematically from many angles in a logical and progressive manner that was easy to follow.

One fault I found with the book was that although the examples are well explained and clearly illustrate each point the authors are trying to make, they are narrowly focused on a higher education academic writing environment. The majority of nonacademic examples are from the playwright, Trevor Griffiths. This opens their selection of supporting evidence to charges of narrowness and lacks the strength that comes from having a broad selection of evidence to support their claims. A broader base of examples from all levels of writing in everyday life would strengthen their case.

Also, they criticize other models of reading for being too prescriptive for new writers. Although their model highlights a new perspective, some new writers will find prescriptive models more helpful in knowing where to begin. The authors conclude that this approach stifles creativity, but I don't think that this need be true. Sometimes knowing where to begin something new is the most difficult step of all.

How does all of this theory about writing as a social practice relate to teaching writing in an SIL field context? I think we have often been naive in our approach to writing (as well as reading) in not fully realizing the political nature that it has. This book can be enlightening, as it clearly explains the place of writing with the immediate social context, the wider cultural context, and the power relations that exist within them. It identifies, with well-illustrated examples, different techniques an author can use to present his ideas in different ways to different readers depending on the social relationship between them. Their model of the reading process illustrates how the social relationships and cultural setting affect the writer writing, as well as the cognitive processes. The ten principles they conclude the book with are applicable to helping writers in newly written languages as well

Although the writing that we in SIL are often concerned with is for writers just developing their literary skills, the political nature of the writing process does not wait until their skills are more fully developed. It is present even in the germ of an idea for the first piece of writing in a language, because the social and cultural context of the language exists even before the writing system itself. Writing, like reading, is a social practice, i.e., an exchange of ideas set in a construct of social relationships in a cultural context. To regard it as anything less is to keep our heads in the sand.

Submitting articles to *Notes on Literacy*

Please be sure the following instructions are followed when submitting an article for possible publication in *Notes on Literacy.*

1. **Submit articles in electronic format (either MAC or DOS), plus send a hard copy to the editor.** If you choose to send an article via e-mail, be sure it is in DOS format, as the editor's computer will not recognize MAC e-mail. A hard copy is needed, because some items do not translate well between computers, as many different computers and programs are used; so viewing the hard copy shows how the author intended the article to appear. Special characters, especially, can get lost.
2. **Include a brief biographical sketch.** This should include relevant training and degrees earned, dates of service, field(s) of service, and current title (e.g., literacy specialist, consultant, etc.).
3. **Be sure all direct quotes (anything in quotation marks) have the proper citation in the text where they occur.** This includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number(s). Indirect quotes (material paraphrased without quotation marks) need to include the author's last name and year of publication.
4. **Include all pertinent information in bibliography.** This includes author's first and last names, year of publication, title of book or journal, and for journals and anthologies: article name, page numbers, volume and issue numbers.
5. **Be sure to include your current mailing address, as well as an e-mail address, if available.** Once an article is accepted and published, the author will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which his or her article appears.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE